



## Getting Grounded in Israel and Zionism

# Facilitation Toolbox

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**Everything you need to bring best in  
class Israel education to your  
community.**

Created by Rabbi Mike Uram

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## Tools for Creating a Productive Civil Discourse

This section contains a number of tools to help you as the facilitator to set the stage with any group you're leading to have a more civil and productive learning experience. You can choose from any of the tools below that work best for you or create your own. As facilitator, you can choose to use these tools at the beginning of your group learning or to salt and pepper these tools in the places you feel they would be most helpful.

### Best Practices for Fostering Civil Discourse

#### **1. Establish Clear Group Norms**

- **Assume Good Intentions:** Start from the belief that everyone is here to learn, not to win or harm.
- **One Mic, One Voice:** Only one person speaks simultaneously—no side conversations or interruptions.
- **Use “I” Statements:** Speak from personal experience (“I think,” “I feel”) rather than making generalizations.
- **Ask Clarifying Questions Before Disagreeing:** When discussing complex topics, it is often hard to understand what people mean beyond a term or phrase they use. A simple way to promote deeper listening is to ask a follow-up question, such as “Tell me more about what you mean here.”
- **Disagree Without Dismissing:** Critique ideas, not people. (“I see it differently” instead of “That’s wrong.”)
- **We Need Spaces to Be Wrong:** When discussing this, it's important to remind people that it is OK to have a rough draft of an idea or a statement and that as we learn, we can revise and edit as we go. We don't want people to fear that saying the wrong thing will disrupt the group or get someone into political trouble.

#### **2. Frame the Purpose**

- Emphasize that the goal is not to persuade, but to understand.
- Frame disagreements as a “debate for the sake of heaven,” and an opportunity to grow, not battles to win.

#### **3. Normalize Complexity**

- Remind participants that discomfort is part of learning.
- Reaffirm that embracing complexity over simple slogans is the best way to grow our understanding. The truth is rarely binary.

#### **4. Encourage Deep Listening**

- Practice active listening (summarize before responding).
- Use techniques like “Reflect and Respond” (e.g., “What I hear you saying is...”).

#### **5. Slow Down the Conversation**

- Use structured turns or go-arounds to ensure all voices are heard.
- Give people time to write their thoughts.
- Take pauses to let ideas settle before reacting.

#### **6. Diversify the Voices**

- Rotate facilitators or response roles (e.g., someone plays “Devil’s Advocate” or “Bridge Builder”).
- Encourage quieter voices or less popular views to have space in the group.

#### **7. Clarify Terminology**

- Define emotionally charged terms (e.g., “colonialism,” “racism,” “apartheid”) before the conversation.
- Agree to explore how people use terms differently rather than arguing over definitions.

#### **8. Practice Repair**

- If harm occurs, acknowledge it. Use group practices for repair, such as naming the issue, apologizing, and re-centering the discussion.

### **Optional Group Norm Poster Headings**

- Listen to Understand, Not to Respond
- Seek Nuance Over Certainty
- Criticize Ideas, Not People
- Speak from Experience, Not Assumptions
- Stay Curious, Especially When It’s Hard
- Take Space, Make Space

### **Activity to Practice Civil Discourse**

Break up into groups and pick a debate you want to consider. Practice how you would engage someone who levies a claim with which you disagree.

1. What ground rules or facilitation techniques from the list above could you use to help foster a productive conversation among people who may disagree about this issue?
2. If someone shares an option with which you disagree or even one that offends you, what are some follow-up questions you could ask to help add more nuance and context?
3. How can you use questions to seek to understand their point of view before rushing in to disagree or offer your perspective?
4. What would you ask to get them to reconsider?
5. What would you say to make your side clear and compelling?

Have groups share their conversations with the whole group.

### Jewish Value of Favoring Complexity Over Simplicity:

In Chapter 1, Rabbi Mike Uram shares a Midrash or Rabbinic commentary from Midrash Tehillim 12:3 that showcases the Jewish tradition's commitment to trying to favor “complexity over simplicity.”

<p>Rabbi Yannai said: The Torah was not given in a clear-cut manner, rather on every statement, God would teach Moses forty-nine reasons (panim, lit. faces) the matter could be pure and forty-nine reasons why the matter could be impure.</p>	<p>א"ר ינאי לא ניתנו דברי תורה          חתוכין אלא כל דבר ודבר שהיה          הקב"ה אומר למשה היה אומר          מ"ט פנים טהור ומ"ט פנים טמא.</p>
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#### **Reflection and Discussion Questions:**

1. How is it surprising that Rabbi Yannai is teaching that even the Torah, the book that is supposed to have all of the clear-cut answers, even that book, can't be understood simply?
2. What are the potential positives and negatives of viewing a situation as too simple or too complex?
3. Strangely, the text uses the word “faces” rather than other words that can mean reasons. What value or wisdom is the text trying to impart with this word choice?
4. Do you think that understanding the different “faces” on a given side of an issue means the same thing as agreeing with that side?
5. How do you think this can be applied to our understanding of the history of Zionism and Israel?
6. How can this value be applied to other complex political issues?

7. How can you foster a value of complexity over simplicity in the communities you work with, lead, or convene?

## Advanced Facilitator’s Guide “Getting Grounded”

You can follow this link to the Advanced Facilitator’s Guide “Getting Grounded.” It will help you think about which target populations could benefit from Getting Grounded, different ways to use the videos or podcast with a group, sample lesson plans, and more.

### Advanced Facilitator’s Guide “Getting Grounded”

- [Advanced Facilitator’s Guide Getting Grounded](#)

## Video Companion Guides

Follow the link below to access a series of guides participants can use while watching or listening to the chapters of “Getting Grounded” to help them stay focused and absorb the content from the course.

### Video Companion Guides

- [Getting Grounded Video Companion Guides](#)

## Chapter 1: Nuance & The Words We Use

### Instructions:

This guide is designed to deepen engagement with the course materials through conversation, reflection, and learning. Consider these ways to incorporate it:

- Use the guide as a starting point for thinking about how you’d like to use this course, different ways to start discussions, and activities to help participants engage personally.
- Equip others in your community or on your team with the skills and confidence to facilitate Israel and Zionism learning for others.
- Distribute printed copies for participants to use as a space for notes or a dedicated spot to record their questions as they watch the course videos.
- Please use your judgment to determine which activities are most appropriate and effective for the specific group you’re working with.

## Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

### **Nurturing the Why:**

Before watching the video, ask your group to reflect on what nurtures their sense of “why” with the questions below:

### **To build flourishing Jewish communities, we must “nurture the why.”**

1. Why are you interested in learning more about Israel and Zionism?
2. What are your biggest questions about Israel and Zionism?
3. What aspects of the history of this region feel most pressing, tense, or dangerous to you personally or politically?
4. What would help you feel confident and grounded in your Jewish leadership on Israel and Zionism?

### **Finding Facts and Critically Reading Sources:**

1. Based on the video, what tools or lenses does Rabbi Mike Uram suggest might help assess how truthful, nuanced, and fact-based a source is versus sources that might be more politically or ideologically driven?
2. How else do you or might you identify which sources are more reasonable regarding such a complex topic?
3. Share other sources you’ve found that seem trustworthy and reasonable and some that you find biased.

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

### **Activity #1 - The many faces in the room**

- Invite each participant to reflect on why they wanted to take this course or what they hope to gain from it. Invite them to journal or draw about their perspective.
- Take eight minutes to have participants share in pairs, encouraging active listening. How it works:: The first partner shares for up to two minutes, uninterrupted, about what they hope to gain from this course. Then, the listening partners restate in their own words, “what I heard you say was.” Finally, the first partner can confirm or amend what the second partner heard. Then they reverse roles.
- This is excellent practice for engaging with people across differences—listening for what someone is saying so we can address their concerns and fears.
- Then, discuss with the whole group. Allow participants to reflect on how everyone is bringing their perspective and how that relates to the themes of the video.

## Definitions and Key Terms:

**Productive Discomfort** - a sustained encounter with new and often challenging information in which learners back away from content outside their comfort zone, resulting in learning and growth.

**Midrash** - a style of Rabbinic commentary that interprets Jewish text. Learn more at <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/midrash-101/>.

**The 49x49** - A rabbinic teaching from Rebbe Yannai that suggests each issue has 49 reasons for and 49 reasons against—a metaphor for the deep complexity of truth. This concept serves as a spiritual and intellectual foundation for the course’s approach to conflict.

**Pluralism** - An approach to learning and dialogue that honors a diversity of views, experiences, and backgrounds. It’s central to the course’s method.

**Binary Thinking** - The habit of reducing issues to either/or categories—right/wrong, good/evil, pro/anti. This course challenges binary thinking by emphasizing nuance and multi-layered analysis.

## Further Learning:

**“A History of Israel” by Anita Shapira** - Offers a comprehensive and balanced account of Israel’s formation, tracing its Zionist roots, key political and military events, and the social and cultural evolution of the Jewish State.

**“A Short History of the Jewish People” by Raymond Scheindlin** - Chapters 10 and 11 offer a concise but intellectually nuanced history of Zionism and Israel.

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**“Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn” by Daniel Gordis** - Offers insights into Israel’s formation, demographic changes, and geopolitical context.

### **Media literacy**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLlv2o6UfTU>.

**Mahloket Matters** - Check out Mahloket Matters from Pardes that delves more deeply into how to disagree agreeably.

- <https://www.pardes.org.il/mahloket-matters/>

**Generative Leadership** - Check out Rabbi Mike's teachings on Generative Leadership, which applies the ideas of Mahloket Matters directly to leadership in the Jewish community and in this current moment.

- [https://jewishfederations-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/urammilh\\_ifna\\_org/EpiWCdWncNpAtxgt-X1yehkBM42aVNDuEH6zyF7IM3EY1w?e=kQk56q](https://jewishfederations-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/urammilh_ifna_org/EpiWCdWncNpAtxgt-X1yehkBM42aVNDuEH6zyF7IM3EY1w?e=kQk56q)

## Chapter 2: Getting Grounded in Some of the Basics of Israel and the Map

### Instructions:

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- Please use your judgment to determine which activities are most appropriate and effective for the specific group you're working with.

### Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

Below is a list of discussion and reflection questions to help engage your group. We've provided a comprehensive list so you can choose the ones that work best for your group. Feel free to use the questions that resonate with you and set aside the questions that don't.

Here's how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you're using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. Why is Israel's small physical size such an essential factor to keep in mind when thinking about its security concerns and regional politics?
2. How might media coverage distort or fail to communicate this sense of scale?
3. What surprised you about the population composition of Israel today?
4. How do the Jewish subgroups (Mizrahi, Ashkenazi) and Arab citizens shape the country's cultural diversity?
5. Israel is often perceived as a nation made up of people who are of European descent and who are white. What does the data about Middle Eastern Jews and Jews from North Africa suggest about this common assumption?
6. What are the key distinctions between the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Golan Heights regarding governance, population, and legal status?
7. Why is it important to understand who controls what and how those areas came to be contested?
8. How does the "Green Line" help us understand the difference between Israel proper and the occupied territories?
9. Why is this Green Line still used today in political and diplomatic discussions?
10. What prompted the construction of the security barrier in the early 2000's, and how has it affected daily life and security dynamics?
11. What tensions arise between security needs and the impact on Palestinian civilians?
12. Compare Israel's relationships with Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.
13. What is Hezbollah, and how does it relate to Iran?
14. If you had to teach someone the basics of Israel's geography and demographics in five minutes, what key points would you highlight—and why?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

### **Activity #1 - “Draw the Line” – Interpreting Borders and Control**

Objective: Explore the complexity of borders and competing claims over land.

Instructions:

1. Provide each group with a simple outline map showing (see handout below)
2. Ask participants to label features like the 1949 Armistice (Green Line)
  - a. Major cities
  - b. Neighboring Countries
  - c. 1949 Green Line
  - d. East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights
  - e. The West Bank and Gaza
3. Ask groups to add notes to the map, highlighting key features of these areas: Please include population size, ethnic makeup of the region, who is the ruling party, and general aspects of their relationship with Israel.
4. Which borders are clearest, and which are most contested?
5. How do overlapping claims influence peace efforts or security policies?
6. Ask participants to discuss what they learned, what challenged their existing assumptions, and what aspects of the region they would like to know more about

#### **Map Handout**

Follow this link to access the map:

 [Blank Map of Israel for Getting Grouped](#)

### **Activity #2 - “Demographics in Dialogue” – Understanding Identity**

#### **Layers**

**Objective:** Engage with the layered identities within Israel’s population and how they impact society and politics.

**Instructions:**

1. Divide into groups and assign each group a population segment:
  - a. Mizrahi Jews
  - b. Ashkenazi Jews
  - c. Arab citizens of Israel
  - d. Druze community
  - e. Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem
2. Ask groups to:

- a. Summarize key demographic, cultural, and historical facts
- b. Discuss what kinds of misunderstandings or generalizations others may have about this group

**Debrief Questions:**

1. Summarize key demographic, cultural, and historical facts
2. Discuss what kinds of misunderstandings or generalizations others may have about this group
3. What does this exercise reveal about Israeli society being monolithic or diverse?
4. How might understanding these internal differences change how we talk about Israeli politics or identity?

### **Activity #3 - “Regional Snapshot” – Understanding the Relationships between the Parties**

**Objective:** Understand the diversity of Israel’s relationships with neighboring countries and how that affects security, diplomacy, and daily life.

**Instructions:** Assign each group one of the following roles:

- Egyptian official
- Jordanian government spokesperson
- Lebanese civilian affected by Hezbollah
- Syrian government official
- Israeli military analyst
- Hamas Member
- Civilian living in Gaza
- Palestinian Israeli

Have each group prepare a two minute briefing:

1. Identify their group's view on the region, Zionism and the conflict
2. Key sources of tension or cooperation
3. Hopes or fears for future developments
4. What simple narratives in the media accurately reflect their views, and which mischaracterize them?
5. What effect do state and non-state actors have on their lived experience?

## Definitions and Key Terms:

**The Green Line** represents the 1949 Armistice lines at the end of the 1948–49 war. It is Israel's internationally recognized border. Today, the “Green Line” circles the West Bank and Gaza. The border fence/wall follows the “Green Line,” deviating in some places to include Jewish population centers in Eastern Jerusalem and the West Bank.

**Mizrahi Jews** – Jews of Middle Eastern and North African descent, making up a significant portion of Israel's Jewish population.

**Ashkenazi Jews** – Jews of European descent, comprising about 45% of Israel's Jewish population.

**Negev Desert** – A large, arid region covering more than half of Israel's land area.

**Galilee (Upper & Lower)** – A lush, hilly region in northern Israel with a significant Palestinian Israeli population.

**West Bank** – A region with approximately 2.8 million Palestinians and about 480,000 Jewish settlers, under partial Palestinian Authority and Israeli military control.

**East Jerusalem** – Annexed by Israel in 1980, home to approximately 230,000 Jews and approximately 350,000 Palestinians.

**Gaza Strip** – A densely populated Palestinian territory formerly under Egyptian control, now ruled by Hamas since 2007.

**Golan Heights** – A strategic plateau captured from Syria in 1967, annexed by Israel, and home to both Jews and Druze Arabs.

**Security Barrier** – A barrier system built to separate Israel from the West Bank, aimed at preventing terrorist attacks.

**Six-Day War (1967)** – The defensive war in which Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula.

**1948–49 War (War of Independence)**—This war followed Israel's establishment, leading to the creation of armistice lines but no formal peace agreements.

**Hezbollah** – An Iran-backed terrorist group and political organization in Lebanon, responsible for launching rocket attacks on Israel.

## **Further Learning:**

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**“Geography of Israel”—provided by Wikipedia** - Provides an overview of Israel’s physical features, climate, and environmental aspects.

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography\\_of\\_Israel#:~:text=Israel's%20area%20is%20ap%20proximately%2020%2C770,mi\)%20at%20its%20narrowest%20point.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Israel#:~:text=Israel's%20area%20is%20ap%20proximately%2020%2C770,mi)%20at%20its%20narrowest%20point.)

**“Demographics of Israel”** - Details the composition and distribution of Israel’s population.

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics\\_of\\_Israel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Israel)

**“Latest Population Statistics for Israel” - Jewish Virtual Library** - Provides updated statistics on Israel’s population.

- [https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/latest-population-statistics-for-israel#:~:text=Income-,Diversity%20%26%20Growth,2%2C114%2C000%20\(20.9%25\)%20were%20Arabs.](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/latest-population-statistics-for-israel#:~:text=Income-,Diversity%20%26%20Growth,2%2C114%2C000%20(20.9%25)%20were%20Arabs.)

**5 Activities to teach Israel Using Maps - Unpacked**

- <https://unpacked.education/article/5-activities-to-teach-israel-using-maps/>

## Chapter 3: The Palestinians Today & Their Origin

### Instructions:

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Here's how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you're using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. Why did the Romans rename Judea as Syria Palaestina, and what were they trying to achieve? What was the status of the Philistines at this point in history?
2. Why is it important not to project today's political meanings onto ancient uses of the word "Palestine"?
3. When and how did Arabs living in the region begin to see themselves as Palestinians rather than just Arabs?
4. What factors contributed to the rise of Palestinian national consciousness in the mid-20th century?
5. Why is it historically misleading to refer to people as "Palestinians" before a certain point in the 20th century?

6. In what ways do Jewish and Palestinian national identities emerge in parallel, and how do they differ?
7. What is the governance structure, and who is in charge in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza? How does this affect Palestinians there? What are the similarities and differences between Palestinian populations living in each area?
8. How do Palestinians feel about Hamas and the PA, and why might they be critical of both?
9. Why did many Palestinians in East Jerusalem reject Israeli citizenship after 1967?
10. How does understanding the emergence of Palestinian identity over time impact how you view the conflict today?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

### **Activity #1: Compare & Contrast: “Palestinians in Different Places”**

**Objective:** Understand the different legal, political, and social conditions experienced by Palestinians in four regions.

**Instructions:** Divide the class into four groups. Assign each:

1. Palestinian citizens of Israel
2. Palestinians in the West Bank
3. Palestinians in Gaza
4. Palestinians in East Jerusalem

Each group answers:

1. What legal status do Palestinians in this area hold?
2. Who governs their daily life and infrastructure?
3. What freedoms or limitations do they experience?

**Follow-up:** Groups present a 2-minute summary of how they answered the four questions they worked on in small groups. Ask the larger group to reflect on what they’ve learned and how it supports or challenges their assumptions about the region.

### **Activity #2 - Statement Sorting: “Truth, Myth, and Oversimplification”**

**Objective:** Confront common slogans or assumptions about Palestinian identity and test them against historical context.

**Instructions:**

- Provide each group with a mix of statements (examples below).
- Groups discuss and sort into three categories:
  1. Generally accurate
  2. Oversimplified or partially true
  3. Misleading or false

**Sample Statements:**

- “Palestinians have always identified as a distinct nation.”
- “Israel has conquered Palestine, the ancient homeland of the Palestinians.”
- “All Arabs in Israel are treated as equal citizens.”
- “ Hamas represents all Palestinians.”
- “Palestinians and Israelis emerged as national identities in the 20th century.”

**Debrief Prompts:**

- How can we tell the difference between advocacy and analysis?
- Why is nuance difficult—but essential—in conflict narratives?

## Definitions and Key Terms:

**Syria Palaestina (135 CE)** – The name given to the province of Judea by the Romans after the Jewish revolts, meant to sever Jewish historical ties to the land by naming it after the Philistines.

**Aelia Capitolina** – The new Roman name for Jerusalem after the second Jewish revolt, in honor of Emperor Hadrian and Roman gods.

**Bar Kokhba Revolt (135 CE)** – The second Jewish revolt against the Roman Empire that led to the mass expulsion of Jews from the land, the renaming of Jerusalem and Judea as part of efforts to erase Jewish presence and influence.

**Philistines** – An ancient people historically in conflict with biblical Israel; the Romans named the region after them, though they had no relation to the Arab inhabitants of later centuries.

**Byzantine Empire (330–1453 CE)** – The Eastern Roman Empire that ruled the land after Rome, continuing the name “Palestine” as its administrative designation.

**Muslim Conquest (7th Century CE)** – The expansion of Islam into the region led to Arab rule over Palestine under various caliphates and later the Ottoman Empire.

**Ottoman Empire (1517–1917)** — This was the ruling empire over Palestine before British control; the land was an administrative district, not a nation-state.

**British Mandate (1920–1948)** – The period when Britain controlled Palestine under a League of Nations mandate, governing both Jewish and Arab populations.

**Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) (1964)** – A political organization founded to represent Palestinian interests and advocate for self-determination.

**First Intifada (1987–1993)** – A Palestinian uprising against Israeli control in the West Bank and Gaza, marking a significant rise in Palestinian national consciousness.

**Israeli Arabs / Palestinian Israelis** – Arab citizens of Israel who have full legal rights but face societal discrimination; many identify as Palestinian Israelis, especially since the early 2000s.

**West Bank (Captured 1967)** – A territory on the western bank of the Jordan River, home to both Palestinian communities and Israeli settlements, governed by a mix of Israeli military control and Palestinian Authority rule.

**Gaza Strip (Controlled by Hamas since 2007)** – A densely populated Palestinian territory on the Mediterranean, previously controlled by Egypt and later by Israel before Israel’s withdrawal in 2005.

**Hamas (Founded 1987)** – A militant Islamist organization governing Gaza since 2007; designated as a terrorist group by the U.S., EU, and other countries.

**Fatah (Founded 1956)** – A secular Palestinian political movement and the dominant faction in the Palestinian Authority, traditionally opposed to Hamas.

**Palestinians of East Jerusalem** – Residents of East Jerusalem, annexed by Israel in 1967; they hold Israeli residency status but not full citizenship.

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## Chapter 4: The Birth of Modern Political Zionism

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Here’s how to apply these questions:

- Pose them to the group to facilitate discussion.
- Use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you’re using.
- Use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. What does Zionism mean to you? How would you define it for yourself and others?
2. Why is it important to understand that Zionism began before the Holocaust and is more than just a response to antisemitism?
3. How does the ancient religious longing for “Next Year in Jerusalem” differ from modern political Zionism?
4. What was the “emancipation,” and why did it create an identity crisis for Jews in Europe?
5. What were the three main Jewish responses to emancipation? How are these dynamics similar or different in diaspora communities today?
6. What does it mean that Zionism sought to make Jews “normal,” and how did this idea reflect European nationalist thinking?
7. What did Theodor Herzl believe about Jewish integration in Europe, and why did he advocate for a Jewish state?
8. What did Ahad Ha’am mean by Jews being a “people of the book,” and what was his vision for a more complete Jewish life?
9. How did Ze’ev Jabotinsky’s Revisionist Zionism attempt to make the Jews “normal?”
10. In what ways did Jabotinsky influence modern Israeli politics and military culture?
11. How did Labor Zionism, as described by A.D. Gordon, attempt to make the Jews “normal?”
12. How did Eliezer Ben-Yehuda attempt to make the Jews “normal?”
13. Why does reducing Zionism to a single idea (either positive or negative) obscure its complexity and evolution?
14. Which strand of Zionism do you find most compelling or challenging, and why?
15. How do Zionist visions reflect broader questions about identity, normalcy, power, and culture?
16. How might these historical ideas help us better understand present-day disagreements within Israeli society?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

## **Activity #1: Delving into Zionist Thinkers**

**Objective:** Examine and compare the major ideological branches of Zionism.

**Instructions:**

1. Distribute printed selections of quotations from multiple Zionist thinkers listed below (print about one copy per person in the group).
2. Spread out the slips of paper with quotations on them in front of each person in the group.
3. Ask participants pairs to read the different quotations and sort them into two piles: on the left, they can put the quotations that feel like a meaningful reason for building a Jewish state, and on the right, they can put the quotations that do not speak to them.

After participants have sorted these quotations and had a few minutes to discuss them in their pairs, ask people to rejoin the larger group and share what came up in the paired discussion.

## **Selected Quotations from Zionism Leaders**

**Theodore Herzl** - “In vain are we loyal patriots, sometimes super loyal; in vain do we make the same sacrifices of life and property as our fellow citizens; in vain do we strive to enhance the fame of our native lands in the arts and sciences, or its wealth by trade and commerce. In our native lands where we have lived for centuries, we are still decried as aliens.”

**Achad Ha-Am** - “But a ‘people of the book,’ unlike normal people, is a slave to the book. It has surrendered its whole soul to the written word. The book ceases to be what it should be, a source of ever-new inspiration and moral strength; on the contrary, its function in life is to weaken and finally crush all spontaneity of action and emotion... The paramount question is, then, whether there is any possibility of curing this long-standing disease; whether the Jewish people can still shake off its inertia, regain direct contact with the actualities of life.”

**Ze’ev Jabotinsky** - “Zionist colonization must either stop, or else proceed regardless of the native population. Which means that it can proceed and develop only under the protection of a power that is independent of the native population – behind an iron wall, which the native population cannot breach.” - The Iron Wall - 1923

“Human society is based on reciprocity. If you remove reciprocity, justice becomes a lie.” - The Ethics of the Iron Wall - 1941

“We were not created in order to teach morals and manners to our enemies. Let them learn these things for themselves before they establish relations with us. We want to hit back at anybody who harms us. Whoever does not repay a blow by a blow is also incapable of repaying a good deed in kind. Only someone who can hate his enemies can be a faithful friend to those who love him.”

“It is always aimed at us, and we must respond. We must end this abuse of ourselves, at all costs. And it is very easy. They spit in our faces without fear, ‘in passing’, for no reason – not because our insulters are blessed with courage and want to pick a fight with us, but because this pleasure is so cheap for them: they will spit at us and go on their way, and nothing will happen.”

**A.D. Gordon** - “A normal people invariably contains a large majority of individuals for whom labor is second nature. But we Jews are different. Labor is our cure... Only by making Labor, for its own sake, our national ideal shall we be able to cure ourselves of the plague that has affected us for many generations and mend the rent between ourselves and Nature. Every one of us is required to refashion themselves so that the Diaspora Jew within him becomes a truly emancipated Jew; so that the unnatural, defective, splintered person within them may be changed into a natural wholesome human being.”

**Eliezer Ben Yehudah** - “Only a Hebrew with a Hebrew heart will understand this, and such a person will understand even without our urging. Let us therefore make the language really live again! Let us teach our young to speak it, and then they will never betray it! But we will be able to revive the Hebrew language only in a country in which the number of Hebrew inhabitants exceeds the number of gentiles. Therefore, let us increase the number of Jews in our desolate land; let the remnants of our people return to the land of their ancestors, let us revive the nation, and its language will be revived too!... True, the Jewish nation and its language died together. But it was not a death by natural causes, not a death of exhaustion, like the death of the Roman nation, which therefore died forever! The Jewish nation was murdered twice, both times when it was in full bloom and youthful vigor... The Jewish religion will, no doubt, be able to endure even in alien lands; it will adjust its forms to the spirit of the place and the age, and its destiny will parallel that of all religions! But the nation? The nation cannot live except on its own soil; only on this soil can it revive and bear magnificent fruit, as in the days of old!”

**Rav Kook** - “A Jew cannot be as devoted and true to his own ideas, sentiments, and imagination in the Diaspora as they can in the Land of Israel... the greater one’s yearning for and attachment to the Land of Israel, the purer their thoughts become, for they then live in the air of the Land of Israel, which sustains everyone who longs to behold the Land. In the Holy Land, a person’s imagination is lucid and clear, clean and pure, capable of receiving the revelation of Divine Truth.”

## **Alternative Modality for Activity #1 - "Zionist Vision Gallery Walk"**

**Objective:** Examine and compare the major ideological branches of Zionism.

### **Instructions:**

1. Set up five stations, each representing one type of Zionism:
  - Political Zionism (Herzl)
  - Cultural Zionism (Ahad Ha'am)
  - Revisionist Zionism (Jabotinsky)
  - Labor Zionism (A.D. Gordon)
  - Linguistic Zionism (Ben-Yehuda)
2. At each station, include a brief excerpt or summary of that thinker's vision.
3. Participants rotate between stations, answering these prompts:
  - What was this vision trying to fix or restore for the Jewish people?
  - What does "normal" mean in this context?
  - How does this vision differ from the others?

### **Debrief Prompts:**

- Which vision of Zionism do you connect with most? Why?
- Where do these visions conflict or complement each other?

## **Activity #2: "Zionist Identity Sorting Cards"**

**Objective:** Explore how different Zionist thinkers responded to Jewish identity challenges in modern Europe.

### **Instructions:**

- Provide each group with a deck of identity cards, each describing a different concept (e.g., exile, assimilation, language, dignity, labor, nationalism, self-defense).
- Have groups sort each card under the type of Zionism it best fits.

### **Discussion Prompt:**

- How do these values reflect both Jewish needs and European influences?
- How might these values still resonate or clash within Israeli society today?

## **Activity #3: "Zionism Debate Theater"**

**Objective:** Understand Zionism's internal disagreements by role-playing as its early leaders.

**Instructions:**

1. Assign each group a Zionist thinker (Herzl, Ahad Ha'am, Jabotinsky, Gordon, Ben-Yehuda).
2. Have them prepare a short twominute speech answering:
  - What problem are you trying to solve?
  - What is your vision of a Jewish future?
  - What role should the land of Israel play?
3. Each group presents its speech followed by a panel-style discussion.

**Debrief Prompts:**

- What were the tensions or agreements between these voices?
- How do these early debates echo in today's Jewish and Israeli conversations?

**Activity #4 - Writing Your Form of Zionism**

**Objective:** Help participants integrate what they learned about the different ideas of what Zionism was supposed to be in the past with their own voices and visions for the future.

**Instructions:**

1. Give each person paper and utensils and give them time to write independently.
2. Once they're done, participants can share what they came up with and note keywords and themes on a whiteboard or similar device..

Here is a framework you can use to get started:

*The Zionist thinkers in this chapter responded to their world and envisioned a different future. They believed that Zionism could renew and transform the Jewish people and, in doing so, transform the world. Now is your chance to add your voice. When you think about 50 or 100 years from now, what do you imagine the impact of Zionism, Israel, and the Jewish people could be?*

**Definitions and Key Terms:**

**Zionism** – A movement for the re-establishment, development, and protection of a Jewish state, centered initially on the historic land of Israel.

**Emancipation (1791)** – The granting of equal rights to Jews in France marked the beginning of Jewish integration into European society and modern Jewish identity struggles.

**Jewish Question/Jewish Problem** – The debate over whether Jews could fully integrate into European society or if they would always remain a separate people.

**Political Zionism** – A branch of Zionism, founded by Theodor Herzl, advocating for a Jewish homeland to ensure Jewish safety and normalcy in society.

**Cultural Zionism** – A Zionist ideology, led by Ahad Ha-Am, emphasizing how the creation of a Jewish state would foster the artistic and intellectual revival of the Jewish people.

**Revisionist Zionism** – A nationalist and militaristic form of Zionism, led by Ze'ev Jabotinsky, advocating for Jewish self-defense and military strength.

**Labor Zionism** – A socialist-oriented form of Zionism, promoted by Ahad Ha'am, focused on agricultural labor and the physical rebuilding of the Jewish people.

**The Uganda Plan** – A proposal by Herzl to establish a Jewish state in Africa as a temporary refuge, ultimately rejected by the World Zionist Congress.

**Ottoman Empire** – The ruling empire over the District of Palestine before the British Mandate, under which both Jews and Arabs lived.

**British Mandate (1917-1948)** – The period when Britain controlled Palestine after WWI, overseeing increasing Jewish immigration and rising tensions between Jews and Arabs.

**Balfour Declaration (1917)** – A statement by the British government supporting the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

**Peel Commission (1937)** – The first official proposal to partition Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, rejected by Arab leaders.

**UN Partition Plan (1947)** – A United Nations proposal to divide Palestine into a Jewish state (55%) and an Arab state (42%), with Jerusalem as an international protectorate.

## **Further Learning:**

**“A History of Israel” by Anita Shapira** - Offers a comprehensive and balanced account of Israel’s formation, tracing its Zionist roots, key political and military events, and the social and cultural evolution of the Jewish state.

**“A Short History of the Jewish People” by Raymond Scheindlin** - Chapters 10 and 11 offer a concise but intellectually nuanced history of Zionism and Israel.

**“The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader” by Arthur Hertzberg** surveys diverse Zionist thinkers and ideologies. It is also a critical historical introduction to the birth of modern Zionism, which is an essential reading for understanding Zionism and Israel.

**“The Zionist Ideas: Visions for the Jewish Homeland—Then, Now, Tomorrow”** by Gil Troy - An updated exploration of diverse Zionist thinkers and ideologies, building upon Arthur Hertzberg’s classic anthology.

**“Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn”** by Daniel Gordis - Offers insights into Israel’s formation, demographic changes, and geopolitical context.

**“Origins and Evolution of Zionism”** by the Foreign Policy Research Institute - An insightful article detailing the historical context and ideological shifts within the Zionist movement.

**Types of Zionism - Jewish Virtual Library** - An exploration of the different streams within the Zionist movement, including political, labor, and cultural Zionism.

**“What is Zionism? | History of Israel Explained”** by Unpacked - A concise video that delves into the origins and evolution of Zionism, clarifying common misconceptions.

- <https://unpacked.education/video/what-is-zionism/>

## Chapter 5: Who Is Indigenous to the Land?

### Instructions:

This guide is designed to deepen engagement with the course materials through conversation, reflection, and learning. Consider these ways to incorporate it:

- Use the guide as a starting point for thinking about how you’d like to use this course, different ways to start discussions, and activities to help participants engage personally.
- Equip others in your community or on your team with the skills and confidence to facilitate Israel and Zionism learning for others.
- Distribute printed copies for participants to use as a space for notes or a dedicated spot to record their questions as they watch the course videos.
- Please use your judgment to determine which activities are most appropriate and effective for the specific group you’re working with.

### Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

Below is a list of discussion and reflection questions to help engage your group. We’ve provided a comprehensive list so you can choose the ones that work best for your group. Feel free to use the questions that resonate with you and set aside the questions that don’t.

Here's how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you're using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

Here are some ideas of how you can use these questions: a) pose them to the group to get them thinking and talking, b) use them as part of a 4 corners activity, a group debate or any other activity to your using to keep people learning and engaged, c) use them to help people process and absorb the content of the course.

1. What is the significance of the Jewish historical connection to the land dating back thousands of years?
2. How should we understand the continuous but small Jewish presence in the land over the centuries?
3. What are the risks of framing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict solely around a contest over indigenous status?
4. How does the story of Ottoman land ownership help explain the dual narratives of Jewish land purchase and Arab displacement?
5. How did the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of British control reshape the region's political future?
6. What was the Balfour Declaration, and how do both sides view its role in shaping the region?
7. How did British promises to both Jews and Arabs contribute to rising tensions during the Mandate period?
8. How might today's debates about legitimacy and land ownership benefit from deeper historical awareness?
9. How would you explain the idea that both Jews and Arabs have legitimate connections to the land?
10. What surprised or challenged you most in this chapter?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

### **Activity #1: "Partition Plans: Then and Now"**

**Objective:** Evaluate the evolution of partition proposals and their implications.

**Instructions:**

- Provide each group with maps and summaries of the 1937 Peel Commission and 1947 UN Partition Plan.
- Groups compare: land distribution, rationale, responses from Jews and Arabs.
- Reflect on how these maps sought to address (or failed to address) competing claims.

**Debrief Prompts:**

- What made the partition idea so controversial?
- How might earlier acceptance have changed history?

**Activity #2: "Then and Now: British Policy & Consequences"**

**Objective:** Connect historical policies to current dynamics.

**Instructions:**

- Groups read short overviews of the Balfour Declaration, Hashemite rewards, and British back-and-forth support.
- Discuss: "What did Britain gain and lose by promising things to both Jews and Arabs?"
- Compared with how modern powers handle conflicting promises in diplomacy today,

**Debrief Prompts:**

- How did British decisions shape today's landscape?
- Are there lessons for modern diplomacy in the region?

**Activity #3: Who Is Indigenous to the Land? Mapping Narratives**

**Objective:** Understand overlapping claims to the land by Jews and Arabs.

**Instructions:**

- Provide groups with a blank outline map of the region.
- Mark key historical dates/periods (e.g., 1000 BCE, 135 CE, 1881, 1917, 1947).
- In each period, note which groups lived in the land and under which authority.

*Discussion:* How do overlapping claims to the land develop over time? What does this suggest about the question of indigeneity?

**Activity 4: "The Ottoman Land Deal Game"**

**Objective:** Understand how local Arabs could lose land unintentionally.

**Instructions:**

- Simulate the Ottoman land system: Assign roles (peasant farmer, Ottoman landowner, tax collector, Zionist buyer).
- Act out a land transaction using simplified contracts and misinformation.

**Debrief Prompts:**

- How did power and distance distort local realities?
- How might this history influence present-day claims?

## Definitions and Key Terms:

**Roman Expulsion (135 CE)** – The forced removal of Jews from Israel by the Roman Empire following the Bar Kokhba Revolt, leading to widespread Jewish diaspora.

**Muslim Empires**—Various Islamic dynasties, including the Mamluks and Ottomans, controlled the land of Israel/Palestine from the 7th century CE onward, with intermittent Christian rule during the Crusades.

**Ottoman Empire (1517-1917)** – The ruling empire over Palestine before British control, under which Jews and Arabs coexisted in a predominantly rural and impoverished land.

**District of Palestine** – A territorial administrative division of the Ottoman Empire, not an independent nation, which became the focus of Zionist immigration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

**Pogroms** – Organized massacres and attacks against Jewish communities, particularly in Eastern Europe, which contributed to increased Jewish migration to Palestine.

**Arab Land Dispossession** – The loss of land ownership by Arab peasants due to Ottoman taxation policies, often without their knowledge, leading to their perception that land had been stolen when, in actuality, Zionists legally purchased it.

**Treaty of Versailles (1919)** – The peace treaty that ended WWI and divided former Ottoman territories, granting Britain control over Palestine and Iraq, and France control over Syria and Lebanon.

**Balfour Declaration (1917)** – A British government statement expressing support for establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine, which intensified Jewish-Arab tensions.

**Peel Commission (1937)** – A British proposal to partition Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, allocating about 20% of the land to Jews, 70% to Arabs, and 10% under British control; accepted by Jews but rejected by Arabs.

**UN Partition Plan (1947)** – A United Nations proposal to divide Palestine into a Jewish state (55% of the land) and an Arab state (42%), with Jerusalem as an international protectorate; accepted by Jews but rejected by Arabs.

## **Further Learning:**

**“A History of Israel” by Anita Shapira** - Offers a comprehensive and balanced account of Israel’s formation, tracing its Zionist roots, key political and military events, and the social and cultural evolution of the Jewish state.

**“A Short History of the Jewish People” by Raymond Scheindlin** - Chapters 10 and 11 offer a concise but intellectually nuanced history of Zionism and Israel.

**“Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn” by Daniel Gordis** - Offers insights into Israel’s formation, demographic changes, and geopolitical context.

**“5 Facts About the Jewish People’s Ancestral Connection to the Land of Israel” by the American Jewish Committee** - This piece outlines key historical points emphasizing the longstanding relationship between the Jewish people and the land, including continuous presence and historical governance.

**“The Ottoman Empire and the Jews” by the American Jewish Committee** - This documentary delves into the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and its Jewish subjects, shedding light on land ownership and community dynamics.

### **Are Jews Indigenous to Israel?**

- <https://unpacked.education/video/are-jews-indigenous-to-israel/>

### **Historical Timeline by AJC**

- <https://www.ajc.org/IsraelConflictTimeline>

### **General Collection of Documents and Sources**

- <https://israeled.org/resources/documents/>

### **Sykes-Picot agreement (1916)**

- <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-sykes-picot-agreement-1916>

#### **Balfour Declaration (1917)**

- <https://israeled.org/resources/documents/balfour-declaration-2/>

#### **Sykes-Picot Agreement (1920)**

- <https://israeled.org/resources/documents/sykes-picot-agreement/>

#### **Peel Commission Report (1937)**

- <https://israeled.org/resources/documents/peel-commission-report/>

#### **UNSCOP Report on Palestine (1947)**

- <https://israeled.org/resources/documents/report-of-the-un-special-committee-on-palestine-unscoop-summary/>

#### **UN Partition Plan (1947)**

- <https://www.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/All-UN-Resolutions.pdf>

#### **Newspaper Article about UN Partition Plan (1947)**

- <https://archive.nytimes.com/learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/11/29/nov-29-1947-united-nations-partitions-palestine-allowing-for-creation-of-israel/>

## Chapter 6: The Debate - The Simple Labels Don't Work

### Instructions:

This guide is designed to deepen engagement with the course materials through conversation, reflection, and learning. Consider these ways to incorporate it:

- Use the guide as a starting point for thinking about how you'd like to use this course, different ways to start discussions, and activities to help participants engage personally.
- Equip others in your community or on your team with the skills and confidence to facilitate Israel and Zionism learning for others.
- Distribute printed copies for participants to use as a space for notes or a dedicated spot to record their questions as they watch the course videos.
- Please use your judgment to determine which activities are most appropriate and effective for the specific group you're working with.

### Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

Below is a list of discussion and reflection questions to help engage your group. We've provided a comprehensive list so you can choose the ones that work best for your group. Feel free to use the questions that resonate with you and set aside the questions that don't.

Here's how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you're using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. Why might people be drawn to framing the conflict as an ancient religious battle, even if it's inaccurate?
2. If the conflict is more about land than religion, how might that change our thinking about possible solutions?
3. How do the definitions of European colonialism and nationalism differ from the goals of Zionism?
4. Why is it misleading to apply the label of "colonialism" or "nationalism" to the Zionist movement?
5. Why is it misleading to apply the label of "apartheid" to Israel?
6. People often use words without knowing what they mean. What would you ask to understand better what the person you are talking to might mean by what they say?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

### **Activity #1- Debunk the Myth**

**Objective:** Practice distinguishing fact from common misconceptions about the conflict.

**Instructions:**

- Divide into small groups (3–4 people).
- Each group picks or is assigned a “common myth” mentioned in the chapter:
  - “*The conflict is religious.*”
  - “*Zionism is colonialism.*”
  - “*Zionism is racism.*”
  - “*Israel is an apartheid state.*”
- Once in small groups, use the following to guide your conversation:
  - Summarize the myth.
  - Using facts from the chapter to explore the origin of the myth, how the myth may have aspects of truth, and how the myth is inaccurate.
  -

After some time in the breakout groups, the larger group returns and shares its findings with the rest of the group. Summarize and draw out any relevant conclusions from what participants in the group are sharing.

**Debrief Prompts:**

1. How does misinformation shape public opinion about Israel and Palestine?
2. What are the origins of this misinformation?
3. What are the motivations for sharing it?
4. Why is this misinformation so “sticky?”

### **Activity #2 - Label Analysis Carousel**

**Objective:** Critically assess the power and misuse of political labels.

**Instructions:**

- Set up **four stations around** the room, each labeled: *Colonialism, Nationalism, Racism, Apartheid.*
- At each station, groups rotate and spend 5–7 minutes:
  - Quickly define the label (based on general historical meaning).
  - Discuss: *Is it fair to apply this label to Israel/Zionism? Why or why not?*

- Write down one nuanced point they agree on at the station.
- After visiting all four stations, groups return to their starting point and present the most important thing they learned.

**Debrief Prompt:**

- What did you notice about how easy or difficult it is to apply loaded labels?

### **Activity #3 - Two Peoples, One Land – Role Play**

**Objective:** Understand how both Israelis and Palestinians have deep roots in the land.

**Instructions:**

- Break into pairs or small groups.
- Each person or group randomly draws a “role”: *Jewish refugee or Arab resident*
- Each prepares a short monologue (2–3 minutes) explaining:
  - Why does the land matter to them?
  - Their fears, hopes, and needs.
- Partners/groups perform their monologues to each other or the larger group.

**Debrief Prompt:** How did stepping into someone else’s narrative change your understanding of the conflict?

### **Activity # 4 - Complexity Mapping**

**Objective:** Visualize the nuance and interconnectedness of the issues.

**Instructions:**

- Provide each group with a big sheet of paper and markers.
- In the center, write: *Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*.
- Around it, they must map out:
  - Key drivers (land, security, historical trauma, etc.).
  - Misleading labels (e.g., colonialism, racism).
  - Important truths
  - Questions that remain unresolved.
- Focus on connections between ideas with arrows or lines.

**Debrief Prompt:**

- Did mapping complexity make it harder or easier to talk about the conflict?

## **Activity #5 - Build a “Nuance Toolkit”**

**Objective:** Identify skills and mindsets necessary for better public conversations.

### **Instructions:**

- Groups brainstorm and create a list called:  
“What We Need to Talk About Israel and Palestine More Thoughtfully”
- Ideas could include:
  - Avoiding inflammatory labels.
  - Asking questions before assuming.
  - Recognizing emotional triggers.
  - Acknowledging historical trauma on both sides.
- Each group shares its toolkit with the class.
- Create a master list combining everyone’s ideas and distribute it afterward.

### **Debrief Prompts:**

- What personal habits might we need to change to engage more thoughtfully in conversations about this conflict?
- Why may it be difficult for those who feel more connected to Israel and Israelis to be open to hearing nuance or to engage in conversation with an Israel detractor?
- What can folks in that situation do to help prepare for these conversations?

### **Notes for Facilitator:**

- Start with a tone of curiosity, empathy, and critical thinking.
- Model nuanced language yourself (e.g., “Let’s explore complexity” instead of “Who’s right?”).  
Keep groups small (3–5 adults) to encourage more intimate conversation.
- Encourage people to share personal reactions, not just “right answers.”
- Disagree to understand others better, not to convince or defeat them.

## **Definitions and Key Terms:**

**Zionism** - A national liberation movement for the Jewish people, advocating for a Jewish homeland in Israel.

**Nationalism** – A political ideology emphasizing national identity, often associated with European states competing for power.

**Colonialism** – The practice of acquiring and exploiting foreign territories for economic gain.

**Apartheid** – A system of laws privileging one group over another based on race, as seen in South Africa.

**Self-Determination** – The UN-recognized right of a people to govern themselves, which includes the Jewish people’s right to establish a homeland.

## **Further Learning:**

**“A History of Israel” by Anita Shapira** - Offers a comprehensive and balanced account of Israel’s formation, tracing its Zionist roots, key political and military events, and the social and cultural evolution of the Jewish state.

**“A Short History of the Jewish People” by Raymond Scheindlin** - Chapters 10 and 11 offer a concise but intellectually nuanced history of Zionism and Israel.

**“Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn” by Daniel Gordis** - Offers insights into Israel’s formation, demographic changes, and geopolitical context.

### **On the Secular Nature of Israeli and Palestinian Conflict**

- <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/03/07/israel-palestine-hamas-gaza-religious-war/#:~:text=On%20both%20sides%2C%20politics%20and,be%20getting%20the%20upper%20hand.>
- <https://www.vox.com/2015/5/14/18093732/israel-palestine-misconceptions>

### **Definition of Nationalism**

- <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nationalism/>

### **Definition of Colonialism**

- <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/#PosColThe>

### **Definition of Apartheid**

- <https://oxford-review.com/the-oxford-review-dei-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-dictionary/apartheid-definition-and-explanation/>

### **Are Jews Indigenous to the Land of Israel**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZV5ddewYMok>

## Chapter 7: Origins of the Conflict & Palestinian Leadership

### Instructions:

This guide is designed to deepen engagement with the course materials through conversation, reflection, and learning. Consider these ways to incorporate it:

- Use the guide as a starting point for thinking about how you'd like to use this course, different ways to start discussions, and activities to help participants engage personally.
- Equip others in your community or on your team with the skills and confidence to facilitate Israel and Zionism learning for others.
- Distribute printed copies for participants to use as a space for notes or a dedicated spot to record their questions as they watch the course videos.
- Please use your judgment to determine which activities are most appropriate and effective for the specific group you're working with.

### Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

Below is a list of discussion and reflection questions to help engage your group. We've provided a comprehensive list so you can choose the ones that work best for your group. Feel free to use the questions that resonate with you and set aside the questions that don't.

Here's how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you're using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. The chapter argues that focusing on "who started it" is an unhelpful framing. Why do you think people are drawn to this kind of binary thinking? What alternative questions might lead to more productive conversations?
2. How does understanding that the conflict began in modern times, not "thousands of years ago," challenge common assumptions you've encountered?
3. How did British colonial policy contribute to the eruption of violence in the district of Palestine? Can you recall other historical examples of colonial powers deepening ethnic or national divisions?
4. Why is it significant that early PLO documents rejected the legitimacy of the UN Partition Plan and the Balfour Declaration? What implications does this have for contemporary

debates?

5. The PLO Charter uses certain antisemitic and ideological tropes. How does this language continue to influence discourse today, especially in activist and campus settings?
6. What are the risks of using politically charged labels, such as “imperialist” or “Zionist conspiracy,” without exploring their origins and historical context?
7. What does the murder of thousands of Palestinians in Jordan and the PLO’s expulsion from Jordan during Black September reveal about tensions within the Arab world regarding Palestinian nationalism?
8. How might understanding the foundational goals of Zionism and Palestinian nationalism side-by-side help us avoid oversimplified slogans today?
9. What role do external powers, such as Great Britain, Jordan, or Egypt, play in shaping the conflict, and how does that change the moral or historical calculus?

### **Optional Wrap-Up Reflection**

- After exploring this chapter, what new questions or uncertainties do you have about the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Where is further exploration needed?
- How can embracing complexity and rejecting simplistic labels help us parse the slogans and the narratives in the media in ways that allow us to more accurately understand the region's current events?

## **Options for Facilitations/Activities:**

### **Activity #1 - Understanding the PLO charter of 1964**

#### **Instructions:**

1. Distribute printed copies of the sections of the PLO charter below.
2. Ask people to read the charter and discuss the questions that follow in small groups.
3. Have each group share what they discuss and pose open questions to the larger group.

### **Selected Quotations from the PLO Charter of 1964**

*We, the Palestinian Arab people, who faced the forces of evil, injustice and aggression against whom the forces of International Zionism and colonialism conspired and worked to displace it, dispossess it from its homeland to realize its freedom and dignity and who has determined to amass its forces and mobilize its efforts and capabilities to continue its struggle and to move forward on the path of holy war until complete and final victory has been attained.*

*Article 2. Palestine with its boundaries at the time of the British Mandate is a regional indivisible unit.*

*Article 7. Jews of Palestinian origin are considered Palestinians if they are willing to live peacefully and loyally in Palestine.*

*Article 17. The Partitioning of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of Israel are illegal and false regardless of the loss of time, because they were contrary to the wish of the Palestine people and its natural right to its homeland, and in violation of the basic principles embodied in the charter of the United Nations, foremost among which is the right to self-determination.*

*Article 18. The Balfour Declaration, the Mandate system and all that has been based upon them are considered fraud. The claims of historic and spiritual ties, ties between Jews and Palestine are not in agreement with the facts of history or with the true basis of sound statehood. Judaism because it is a divine religion is not a nationality with independent existence. Furthermore, the Jews are not one people with an independent personality because they are citizens of the countries to which they belong.*

*Article 19. Zionism is a colonialist movement in its inception, aggressive and expansionist in its goals, racist and segregationist in its configurations and fascist in its means and aims.*

*Article 24. This Organization does not exercise any regional sovereignty over the West Bank in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, or the Gaza Strip*

You can read the full text at

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-original-palestine-national-charter-1964>

### **Reflection and Discussion Questions:**

1. It can be confusing when people talk about Palestine. They may mean just the West Bank and Gaza or may be referring to all of Israel that was part of the Ottoman district of Palestine at one point. Given that the PLO charter was published in 1964, before Israel controlled the West Bank or Gaza, what land do you think the charter intends to “liberate?”

2. Can you spot any antisemitic tropes or dog whistles in the text? Look for anything that hints at an international conspiracy claiming Judaism is only a religion and not a people.
3. What are the implications of the charter's claims that the UN Partition Plan and the Balfour Declaration are illegal, false, and fraudulent? What does that mean about the internationally recognized state of Israel? What does that mean for the millions who only call Israel home?
4. Can you spot the rhetoric in the charter mirrors Nazi and Soviet propaganda against the Western allies (look for accusations of imperialism, colonialism, racism, etc.).
5. How is the PLO charter reflective of some of the rhetoric we see today, and how is it different?
6. What do you make of the fact that the charter goes out of its way to point out that the PLO doesn't claim to exercise any authority over the West Bank, Gaza, or the Kingdom of Jordan?

## **Activity #2 - "Unravel the Narrative" Timeline Exercise**

**Purpose:** Trace the evolution of Jewish-Arab relations and explore the turning points that shifted cooperation into conflict.

### **Instructions:**

- Provide each group with key events from 1881–1970 (e.g., early Zionist immigration, 1920 and 1926 riots, 1936–39 Arab Revolt, creation of Fatah, founding of the PLO, Black September).
- Ask groups to:
  - Place the events in chronological order.
  - Label each as cooperation, rising tension, external influence, or violent rupture.
  - Identify and discuss: At what point do you think the conflict became more entrenched? Why?
- Share insights with the whole group.

## **Printable Timeline Event Cards: 1881–1970**

**Cut along the dotted lines to create individual cards for small group activities.**

---

Event Card: Early Zionist Immigration (1881–1900s) - Jews begin immigrating to Palestine from Europe, purchasing land and forming small communities. This marks the beginning of modern political Zionism.

---

Event Card: Arab Riots in Palestine (1920) - First major outbreak of violence by local Arabs against Jewish communities under British Mandate rule, driven by fears of Zionist intentions.

---

Event Card: Arab Riots Renewed (1926) - A second wave of violence erupts as tensions between Arab and Jewish communities grow in response to British policies and growing Jewish immigration.

---

Event Card: Arab Revolt (1936–1939) - A large-scale uprising by Palestinian Arabs against British rule and Jewish immigration. Many historians see this as the beginning of the broader Arab-Israeli conflict.

---

Event Card: UN Partition Plan (1947) - The United Nations proposes dividing British-controlled Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. Jewish leaders accept the plan; Arab leaders reject it.

---

Event Card: Israeli War of Independence / Palestinian Nakba (1948–1949) - Following the UN vote, war breaks out. Israel declares independence and is invaded by neighboring Arab countries. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians become refugees.

---

Event Card: Suez Crisis (1956) - Israel joins Britain and France in attacking Egypt following the nationalization of the Suez Canal, heightening tensions in the region.

---

Event Card: Founding of Fatah (1959) - Members of the Palestinian diaspora found Fatah, a nationalist political and armed movement seeking to replace Israel with an Arab Palestinian state.

---

Event Card: Founding of the PLO (1964) - The Palestine Liberation Organization is created at an Arab League summit in Egypt to unify Palestinian factions under a single political and military banner.

---

Event Card: Black September (1970) - King Hussein of Jordan expels the PLO after clashes and fears of Palestinian uprising. Thousands of Palestinians are killed or displaced in the conflict.

---

### **Activity #3 - “Myth vs. History” Fact-Checking Challenge**

**Purpose:** Distinguish between common myths and historical facts.

**Instructions:**

- Assign each group one of the following claims:
  - “Jews and Arabs have always been enemies for thousands of years.”
  - “The PLO was always focused on liberating Gaza and the West Bank.”
  - “The conflict is purely religious.”
  - “Israelis are the only group that has persecuted the Palestinians.”
  
- Groups must build a 3–4 point argument using facts from the chapter to correct or complicate the myth.
  
- Groups present and reflect: Why do these narratives persist even when historically inaccurate?

### **Definitions and Key Terms:**

**Ottoman Empire** – The ruling power over Palestine until the early 20th century, under which Jewish and Arab populations coexisted with relatively little conflict.

**Zionism** – A national movement advocating for establishing a Jewish homeland in Israel, which intensified Jewish immigration to Palestine in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

**British Mandate** – The period during which the British Empire controlled the district of Palestine after World War I

**Arab Riots (1920 & 1926)**—These early violent uprisings marked the beginning of large-scale Arab-Jewish conflict, which was primarily influenced by British policies.

**Arab Revolt (1936-1939)** – A major uprising against British rule and Jewish immigration, considered by many historians as the true beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

**War of Independence (1948-1949)** – The war following Israel’s declaration of independence, in which five surrounding Arab nations invaded Israel; Palestinians and detractors of Israel refer to this period as the Nakba (catastrophe).

**Fatah (Established 1959)** – A Palestinian nationalist political party, initially focused on armed struggle against Israel, later becoming the dominant faction within the Palestinian Authority.

**Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) (Established 1964)** – An umbrella organization formed to represent Palestinian interests, initially dedicated to the elimination of Israel.

**PLO Charter** – The founding document of the PLO, containing antisemitic rhetoric and rejecting Israel’s legitimacy, while framing Zionism as an imperialist and racist movement.

**Pan-Arab Nationalism** – A political ideology promoting the unity of Arab nations, which influenced Palestinian nationalism.

**Yasser Arafat** – Leader of Fatah and chairman of the PLO from 1969 until he died in 2004, associated with both Palestinian statehood efforts and acts of terrorism.

**Terrorism & Hijackings** – Tactics used by Palestinian militants in the 1970s, to gain international attention for their cause, but which also contributed to the PLO’s designation as a terrorist organization.

**Jordan & Black September (1970)** – The period when King Hussein of Jordan killed thousands of Palestinians from Jordan and expelled the PLO.

## **Further Learning:**

**“A History of Israel” by Anita Shapira** - Offers a comprehensive and balanced account of Israel’s formation, tracing its Zionist roots, key political and military events, and the social and cultural evolution of the Jewish state.

**“A Short History of the Jewish People” by Raymond Scheindlin** - Chapters 10 and 11 offer a concise but intellectually nuanced history of Zionism and Israel.

**“Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn” by Daniel Gordis** - Offers insights into Israel’s formation, demographic changes, and geopolitical context.

#### **Historical Timeline by AJC**

- <https://www.ajc.org/IsraelConflictTimeline>

#### **General Collection of Documents and Sources**

- <https://israeled.org/resources/documents/>

#### **Sykes-Picot agreement (1916)**

- <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-sykes-picot-agreement-1916>

#### **Balfour Declaration (1917)**

- <https://israeled.org/resources/documents/balfour-declaration-2/>

#### **Sykes-Picot Agreement (1920)**

- <https://israeled.org/resources/documents/sykes-picot-agreement/>

#### **Peel Commission Report (1937)**

- <https://israeled.org/resources/documents/peel-commission-report/>

#### **UNSCOP Report on Palestine (1947)**

- <https://israeled.org/resources/documents/report-of-the-un-special-committee-on-palestine-unscoop-summary/>

#### **UN Partition Plan (1947)**

- <https://www.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/All-UN-Resolutions.pdf>

#### **Newspaper Article about UN Partition Plan (1947)**

- <https://archive.nytimes.com/learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/11/29/nov-29-1947-united-nations-partitions-palestine-allowing-for-creation-of-israel/>

## **Chapter 8: The 1948-49 War**

## Instructions:

This guide is designed to deepen engagement with the course materials through conversation, reflection, and learning. Consider these ways to incorporate it:

- Use the guide as a starting point for thinking about how you'd like to use this course, different ways to start discussions, and activities to help participants engage personally.
- Equip others in your community or on your team with the skills and confidence to facilitate Israel and Zionism learning for others.
- Distribute printed copies for participants to use as a space for notes or a dedicated spot to record their questions as they watch the course videos.
- Please use your judgment to determine which activities are most appropriate and effective for the specific group you're working with.

## Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

Below is a list of discussion and reflection questions to help engage your group. We've provided a comprehensive list so you can choose the ones that work best for your group. Feel free to use the questions that resonate with you and set aside the questions that don't.

Here's how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you're using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. How might the differing goals and strategies of the various Arab armies and Palestinian Arab militias have affected the outcome of the war?
2. After engaging with this chapter, how do you understand what happened during the 1948 war? How would you describe to another person what happened? How do the facts of the war challenge the simple narratives out there?
3. What strategic advantages did the new Jewish state have going into the 1948 war, despite appearing to be the underdog?
4. How have declassified documents from Israel and Britain (made public in the 1980s) changed historians' understanding of the 1948 war? Given the emotional weight of the 1948 war for both Jews and Palestinians, what are some responsible ways to study and discuss these events today?
5. How can we foster discussions that acknowledge suffering on both sides without erasing complexity?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

### **Activity # 1 - Case Study - Engaging with Someone with Strong Anti-Zionist Views**

#### **Instructions:**

- Divide into small groups of 3-4 people.
- Read over the case study below and discuss the following:
  1. What information and perspectives from this course offer a factual counterpoint to the points made in the case study?
  2. What claims are being made in this case study are either factually incorrect or overly simplistic in ways that lead to false conclusions?
  3. What strategies can you use to engage in predictive conversations with someone with these views?
  4. What strategies can you use to help this person understand the history of the 1948 war from your perspective and from the perspective of historical sources, similar to what is shared in this course?

#### **Case Study of an Israeli Detractor**

There is a person in a position of influence in your community (for example: a journalist, a member of the student government, a city council or school board member). They are an outspoken activist who describe themselves as “Pro-Palestinian.” They ask to meet with you to share their perspective on the 1948-49 events and get your sense of these events. Here is what they share with you.

*“I have spoken with many friends who are Palestinian and read many articles about this. What I’ve learned is that the creation of Israel in 1948 was a catastrophe for the Palestinian people. More than 700,000 Palestinians were expelled from their land. Their homeland was destroyed by Zionism which is a colonial project led by White Europeans who have no roots in this part of the world. The war was not a war of independence; it was a war of ethnic cleansing. The Jewish armies, from the very onset of the war, had a plan to expel Palestinians from our homes. This catastrophe makes the entire idea of Israel illegitimate. It should never have been founded and should not exist today. The only way to stand up for the real indigenous people is to agree with this position.”*

- Each group should prepare to report what they came up with in response to the discussion questions.
- After presentations, discuss:
  - a. What are the strongest strategies and arguments for engaging with this person in this case study?

- b. What feels most difficult or insurmountable for you in this situation?
- c. What did you learn from this exercise that you could use in real life?

## **Activity # 2 - Role Play: The Road to Jerusalem**

### **Scenario:**

- Imagine you are military advisors to the fledgling Israeli government in 1948. Supplies to Jerusalem are being cut off by Arab militias in the hills along Road #1.
- You must propose a military strategy:
  - How aggressive should you be?
  - What ethical considerations should guide your actions toward the Arab villages?
  - Should you hold conquered villages or withdraw once safe passage is secured?

### **Task:**

- In groups of 4–5, draft a short *military and ethical policy* (bullet points are fine).
- Present and explain your choices to the whole group.
- Afterward, reflect: How did your priorities (survival, ethics, long-term consequences) conflict or align?

## **Activity #3 - Mapping Exercise: Borders and Consequences**

### **Instructions:**

- Provide a blank 1947 UN Partition Plan map and a 1949 Armistice map (or project them).
- Here is a 1947 UN Partition Plan Map:  
[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/db/UN\\_Partition\\_Plan\\_For\\_Palestine\\_1947.svg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/db/UN_Partition_Plan_For_Palestine_1947.svg)
- Here is a 1949 Armistice Map:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949\\_Armistice\\_Agreements#/media/File:United\\_Nations\\_Palestine\\_map\\_showing\\_Armistice\\_Agreements\\_between\\_Israel\\_&\\_Lebanon,\\_Syria,\\_Jordan\\_&\\_Egypt\\_1949-1950.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949_Armistice_Agreements#/media/File:United_Nations_Palestine_map_showing_Armistice_Agreements_between_Israel_&_Lebanon,_Syria,_Jordan_&_Egypt_1949-1950.jpg)
- In pairs or trios:
  - Color or mark the areas that changed between the two maps.
  - Discuss:
    - Why were certain areas conquered?
    - What were the strategic or security reasons?
    - What human consequences (refugees, displaced communities) resulted from these changes?
- Wrap up by reflecting:

- How do borders “on the ground” tell a more complicated story than diplomatic agreements?

## **Activity #4 - Personal Reflection Circle: Wrestling with Complexity**

### **Instructions:**

- Sit in a circle. Each person speaks in turn (no cross-talk).
- Reflect on one or both of these prompts:
  - **Prompt 1:** Share one thing you believed about the 1948 war before today, and how your perspective has changed or deepened.
  - **Prompt 2:** Share a moment in history you find especially complicated and why.
- After everyone speaks, open a group discussion about how sitting with discomfort can deepen historical understanding.

### **Definitions and Key Terms:**

**British Mandate of Palestine (1920-1948)** – A period when Britain controlled Palestine under a League of Nations mandate. Britain eventually decided to withdraw, leading to the UN Partition Plan.

**United Nations Partition Plan (1947)** – A UN proposal to divide Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem as an international city. The plan was accepted by Jewish leaders but rejected by Arab leaders.

**Armistice Agreements (1949)** – A series of ceasefire agreements signed between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria that ended the war without a formal peace treaty.

**Green Line (1949 Armistice Line)** – The demarcation lines established between Israel and neighboring Arab countries after the war, which make up the internationally recognized borders of Israel.

**East Jerusalem & West Jerusalem** – Jerusalem was divided after the 1948 war, with Jordan controlling East Jerusalem (including the Old City) and Israel controlling West Jerusalem.

**Nakba (“The Catastrophe”)** – The Palestinian term for the events of 1948, referring to the loss of the 1948 war and the displacement and dispossession of Palestinian Arabs as a result of the war.

**Arab Militias (Irregular Forces)** – Palestinian Arab armed groups that participated in the war alongside the formal armies of the Arab states.

**Yishuv** – The pre-state Jewish community in Palestine, which prepared for military defense and later formed the basis of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

**Haganah** – The main Jewish paramilitary force before Israeli statehood, later forming the core of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

**Irgun and Lehi (Stern Gang)** – Jewish militant groups that carried out attacks during the war, sometimes in opposition to Haganah’s strategies.

**Siege of Jerusalem** – A crucial battle in which Arab forces attempted to isolate Jewish residents of Jerusalem, leading to desperate Israeli supply efforts and key territorial gains.

**Benny Morris & New Historians**—A group of Israeli historians who emerged in the 1980s and used newly declassified documents to challenge traditional narratives about the 1948-49 war.

## Further Learning:

**“1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War” by Benny Morris (2008)** is a scholarly yet accessible account of the history of the 1948 war. The book traces the roots, battles, and consequences of the war. Morris avoids simplistic narratives, showing that both sides acted with a mix of ideology, fear, and opportunism.

**“My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel” by Ari Shavit** is a provocative book that wrestles with the tension between Jewish survival and Palestinian displacement, telling an evocative story of both triumph and tragedy.

**“A History of Israel” by Anita Shapira** - Offers a comprehensive and balanced account of Israel’s formation, tracing its Zionist roots, key political and military events, and the social and cultural evolution of the Jewish state.

**“A Short History of the Jewish People” by Raymond Scheindlin** - Chapters 10 and 11 offer a concise but intellectually nuanced history of Zionism and Israel.

**“Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn” by Daniel Gordis** - Offers insights into Israel’s formation, demographic changes, and geopolitical context.

### **1948, Israel, and the Palestinians by Efraim Karsh**

- <https://www.commentary.org/articles/efraim-karsh/1948-israel-and-the-palestinians-a-annotated-text/>

### **1948 Israeli War of Independence | History of Israel Explained | Unpacked**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjysy7ONisA>

## Chapter 9: Creation of Refugee Problems

### Instructions:

This guide is designed to deepen engagement with the course materials through conversation, reflection, and learning. Consider these ways to incorporate it:

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- Equip others in your community or on your team with the skills and confidence to facilitate Israel and Zionism learning for others.
- Distribute printed copies for participants to use as a space for notes or a dedicated spot to record their questions as they watch the course videos.
- Please use your judgment to determine which activities are most appropriate and effective for the specific group you're working with.

### Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

Below is a list of discussion and reflection questions to help engage your group. We've provided a comprehensive list so you can choose the ones that work best for your group. Feel free to use the questions that resonate with you and set aside the questions that don't.

Here's how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you're using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. What were the leading causes of the Palestinian Arab refugee crisis after the 1948 war? How do different narratives emphasize or downplay particular causes?
2. Why did most Arab countries refuse to fully integrate Palestinian refugees after 1948?
3. How does the story of Jewish refugees from Arab and Islamic countries affect our understanding of the broader narrative of refugees in the Middle East?
4. How did the arrival of Mizrahi Jews shape the young Israeli state's demographics, culture, and politics? How might their experience challenge common stereotypes about Israeli society?
5. What is unique about UNRWA's definition of Palestinian refugees compared to other

refugees?

6. If you were designing a peace process today, how would you address the refugee issues from 1948–49 in a way that acknowledges both populations?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

### **Activity #1 - Case Study: The Role of UNRWA**

**Objective:** To engage with definitions of who is a refugee to better understand the unique role that UNRWA has played in this history of the conflict.

**Scenario:**

- You are advisors to a newly elected UN Secretary-General.
- The Secretary-General asks you to recommend whether UNRWA's refugee definitions and mandates should:
  - Be reformed
  - Be kept as they are
  - Be phased out

**Instructions:**

- In groups of 4–5, draft a five -bulletpoint recommendation with your reasoning.
- Present your recommendations to the larger group.
- After presentations, reflect:
  - How do humanitarian and political goals conflict or align?

### **Activity #2 - Mapping Refugee Movements (need to add map)**

**Objective:** To gain a better understanding of the map of the region and the movement of different refugee populations in the region.

**Instructions:**

- Using the map handout (see below):
  - Mark and label where Palestinian Arab refugees fled after 1948.
  - Mark and label where Jewish refugees fled from Arab and Islamic countries.
- Then, discuss:

- How does mapping the refugee movements change your understanding of the regional impact of 1948?
- How might physical geography (e.g., proximity to borders) have shaped refugee outcomes?

## Definitions and Key Terms:

**Palestinian Refugees (1948-49)** – The displacement of approximately 700,000 Palestinian Arabs during and after Israel’s War of Independence, many of whom settled in the West Bank (controlled by Jordan), Gaza (controlled by Egypt), or neighboring Arab countries.

**Arab Israelis/Palestinian Israelis** – The group of people descended from the 150,000-160,000 Palestinian Arabs who stayed in Israel during and after the war and were granted Israeli citizenship.

**UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees)** – A UN agency established in 1949, solely dedicated to Palestinian refugees, which defines refugee status to include descendants of original refugees.

**Perpetual Refugee Status** – The policy by which Palestinian refugees and their descendants continue to be classified as refugees rather than being integrated into neighboring Arab countries.

**Right of Return** – A demand by many Palestinian refugees and their supporters that they and their descendants be allowed to return to their original homes in what is now Israel.

**Mizrahi Jews (“Eastern Jews”)** – Jewish communities from the Middle East and North Africa who were expelled or fled between 1948 and 1952 due to rising antisemitism after Israel’s establishment.

**Jewish Refugee Crisis (1948-1952)** – The displacement of between 850,000 and one million Jews from Arab and Islamic countries, with approximately 650,000 settling in Israel.

**Refugee Camps** – Temporary (and later permanent) settlements where many Palestinian refugees lived, often under UNRWA administration. These settlements are small cities with permanent buildings and roads.

**UN vs. UNRWA Refugee Definitions** – The general UN definition of refugees applies only to those who personally fled, while UNRWA includes their descendants indefinitely.

## Further Learning:

**“1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War” by Benny Morris (2008)** is a scholarly yet accessible account of the history of the 1948 war. The book traces the roots, battles, and consequences of the war. Morris avoids simplistic narratives, showing that both sides acted with a mix of ideology, fear, and opportunism.

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**“Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn” by Daniel Gordis** - Offers insights into Israel’s formation, demographic changes, and geopolitical context.

### **1948 Israeli War of Independence | History of Israel Explained | Unpacked**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjysy7ONisA>

## **Chapter 10: Israel 1949-1967**

### Instructions:

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- Equip others in your community or on your team with the skills and confidence to facilitate Israel and Zionism learning for others.
- Distribute printed copies for participants to use as a space for notes or a dedicated spot to record their questions as they watch the course videos.
- Please use your judgment to determine which activities are most appropriate and effective for the specific group you’re working with.

## Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

Below is a list of discussion and reflection questions to help engage your group. We've provided a comprehensive list so you can choose the ones that work best for your group. Feel free to use the questions that resonate with you and set aside the questions that don't.

Here's how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you're using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. Why was the Law of Return so important to Israel in 1950? What symbolic and practical roles did it serve in the post-Holocaust era?
2. How do the 1970 revisions, especially adopting both Halachic and Nazi definitions, reflect the paradoxes of Jewish identity and history?
3. What does the Sinai Campaign reveal about the global balance of power during the Cold War?
4. How did Ben-Gurion's decision to negotiate reparations with West Germany challenge public opinion? How did the deal with West Germany affect Israeli culture and economics?
5. Why did Ben-Gurion want Eichmann tried in Israel, and what was the impact of doing so publicly? How did the trial affect Israeli society's relationship with Holocaust memory?

What are the values and limitations of using trials as public history and national reckoning?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

### **Activity # 1. Constitutional Debate: Revising the Law of Return**

#### **Scenario:**

- It's 1970. Israel is debating how to revise the Law of Return.

#### **Instructions:**

- Divide into small groups and assign each group a stakeholder:
  - Orthodox religious leader
  - Holocaust survivor
  - Mizrahi immigrant

- Secular Israeli government official
- Diaspora Jew (American or European)

**Task:**

- Each group must argue for or against the proposed revisions (Halachic and Nazi definitions).
- After presenting, discuss:  
What does this debate reveal about the complexity of defining “Who is a Jew”?

## **Activity #2 - Crisis Council Simulation: The Sinai Campaign**

**Scenario:**

- You are in Israel’s war cabinet in October 1956.
- Britain and France propose a secret alliance to strike Egypt after Nasser seizes the Suez Canal.

**Task:**

- Decide:
  - Should Israel join the campaign?
  - What goals would justify military involvement?
  - How do you weigh short-term security against long-term global reputation?

**Debrief:**

- After presenting decisions, compare what happened.
- Reflect on how international diplomacy can limit military success.

## **Activity # 3 - Historical Ethics Roundtable: Reparations from Germany**

**Prompt:**

- In 1952, Ben-Gurion signed an agreement with West Germany for reparations.

**Instructions:**

- In small groups, explore:
  - Should a Jewish state accept money from the successor of the Nazi regime?
  - What arguments could Ben-Gurion have made to justify it?
  - How might survivors have felt?

**Group Reflection:**

- What would *you* have done in Ben-Gurion's place?

## **Activity #4 - Public Reckoning: Planning the Eichmann Trial**

### **Scenario:**

- You are Ben-Gurion's advisory team planning the Eichmann trial.

### **Task:**

- Decide on:
  - How public should the trial be?
  - What educational and emotional goals do you have?
  - What risks come with putting a Nazi on trial in a Jewish state?

### **Bonus Challenge:**

- Design a public history campaign (poster, exhibit, newspaper) around the trial.

## **Definitions and Key Terms:**

**Law of Return (1950)** – A law granting any Jew the right to immigrate to Israel and obtain citizenship, reinforcing Israel as a Jewish homeland and safe haven in the wake of the Holocaust.

**Revision of the Law of Return (1970)** – An amendment to the original law, defining a Jew as someone with a Jewish mother (per traditional Jewish law) and expanding eligibility based on the Nazi definition (anyone with a Jewish grandparent).

**Sinai Campaign (1956)** – Also known as the Suez Crisis, a military operation in which Israel, alongside Britain and France, invaded Egypt to regain access to the Suez Canal after its nationalization by Egypt.

**Gamal Abdel Nasser** – The Egyptian president who led the nationalization of the Suez Canal, became a symbol of Arab nationalism, and was seen as a champion of anti-colonialism despite Egypt's military defeat.

**Decade of Calm (1957-1967)** – A period of relative peace for Israel, marked by state-building, economic development, and the integration of Jewish immigrants.

**West Germany Reparations Agreement (1951-1952)** – A controversial deal negotiated by Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in which West Germany provided financial reparations and economic support to Israel as reparations for German theft of Jewish property and murder of Jewish lives during the Holocaust.

**Eichmann Trial (1961)** – A highly publicized trial held in Israel to bring Adolf Eichmann to justice for crimes against humanity and the Jewish people, resulting in his execution in 1962.

## **Further Learning:**

**“A History of Israel” by Anita Shapira** - Offers a comprehensive and balanced account of Israel’s formation, tracing its Zionist roots, key political and military events, and the social and cultural evolution of the Jewish state.

**“A Short History of the Jewish People” by Raymond Scheindlin** - Chapters 10 and 11 offer a concise but intellectually nuanced history of Zionism and Israel.

**“Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn” by Daniel Gordis** - Offers insights into Israel’s formation, demographic changes, and geopolitical context.

### **Eichmann Trial**

- <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/eichmann-trial>

### **The Trial of Adolf Eichmann - YouTube Documentary**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uANesju1B58>

### **Law of Return - Original and Amended Version**

- <https://israeled.org/resources/documents/israels-law-return/>

### **Law of Return - Unpacked Video**

- [https://unpacked.media/the-law-of-return-coming-home/?gad\\_source=1&gad\\_campaignid=13691711031&gbraid=OAAAAADp4jqvk1vZkeCQgl-jvCYM1S8onl&gclid=Cj0KCQjw0LDBBhCnARIsAMpYIAo87YqaE6jSGi4sRKaSI5mg\\_phU\\_JGYQQGK8DmEFtUt4dD\\_IR14RuQaAgDdEALw\\_wcB](https://unpacked.media/the-law-of-return-coming-home/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=13691711031&gbraid=OAAAAADp4jqvk1vZkeCQgl-jvCYM1S8onl&gclid=Cj0KCQjw0LDBBhCnARIsAMpYIAo87YqaE6jSGi4sRKaSI5mg_phU_JGYQQGK8DmEFtUt4dD_IR14RuQaAgDdEALw_wcB)

### **Sinai Campaign**

- <https://unpacked.education/video/the-war-for-control-of-the-suez-canal/>

## **Chapter 11: Six Day War & Birth of Settlements**

### **Instructions:**

This guide is designed to deepen engagement with the course materials through conversation, reflection, and learning. Consider these ways to incorporate it:

- Use the guide as a starting point for thinking about how you'd like to use this course, different ways to start discussions, and activities to help participants engage personally.
- Equip others in your community or on your team with the skills and confidence to facilitate Israel and Zionism learning for others.
- Distribute printed copies for participants to use as a space for notes or a dedicated spot to record their questions as they watch the course videos.
- Please use your judgment to determine which activities are most appropriate and effective for the specific group you're working with.

## Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

Below is a list of discussion and reflection questions to help engage your group. We've provided a comprehensive list so you can choose the ones that work best for your group. Feel free to use the questions that resonate with you and set aside the questions that don't.

Here's how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you're using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. What specific events and miscommunications led to the outbreak of the Six-Day War? How do these challenge the narrative that some Israel detractors have that Israel initiated the war to gain territory?
2. What do Israel's fears and preparations (like mass graves) suggest about its mindset before the war began? How does this shape our interpretation of the preemptive strike?
3. What were the immediate challenges Israel faced after its victory in the Six-Day War?
4. What were some of the competing motivations for keeping or trading the newly acquired lands?
5. How do spiritual, security, and historical claims complicate decisions about land?
6. What does "creating facts on the ground" mean, and how did it shape the post-war period?
7. Why is it misleading to think of "the settlements" as a single, unified project? How do ideology, coalition politics, and economics all factor into their growth?
8. How does the history of Israel's dismantling of settlements in Gaza (2005) and Sinai (1979) complicate claims that settlements make peace impossible?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

### **Activity #1 - Historical Simulation: Israel's Cabinet After the War**

**Scenario:**

It's June 11, 1967. The war is over, and Israel has tripled its territory.

**Roles:**

Each group represents a different voice in the Israeli cabinet:

- Military strategist
- Religious Zionist
- Peace negotiator
- Holocaust survivor
- International diplomat

**Task:**

- Decide: Should Israel hold these new territories, trade them for peace, or create a temporary plan?
- Present your decision and reasons.
- After all groups share, reflect: How does holding multiple perspectives deepen our understanding?

### **Activity #2: Missteps and Misreadings – A Crisis Simulation**

**Goal:** Analyze the sequence of misunderstandings and unintended escalations that led to war in 1967.

**Instructions:**

1. Divide into small groups. Assign each group one actor from the crisis:
  - Israel
  - Egypt
  - Syria
  - Jordan
  - Soviet Union
  - UN Peacekeeping Force
2. Each group receives a brief description of that actor's perspective and actions in the weeks before the war.

**Group 1: Israel** - Israel believed that it was facing existential danger. Arab leaders were publicly threatening to destroy the Jewish state, and Arab radio broadcasts talked about turning the sea red with Jewish blood. Mass graves were dug in anticipation of massive casualties. Israel felt isolated and abandoned by the international community. The closure of the Straits of Tiran was seen as an act of war. Israel had also just held an Independence Day parade in Jerusalem—a demilitarized zone—which was misinterpreted by Arab states as a provocative act. With Arab troops massing on all sides and the UN peacekeepers expelled, Israel feared it would be attacked imminently and decided to launch a preemptive strike on June 5, 1967.

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**Group 2: Egypt (under Gamal Abdel Nasser)** - Egypt received false intelligence from the Soviet Union suggesting that Israel was preparing to attack Syria. In response, Nasser ordered Egyptian troops into the Sinai, expelled the UN peacekeepers, and closed the Straits of Tiran, cutting off Israeli shipping access. These steps were intended to demonstrate Egyptian strength and leadership in the Arab world, particularly among countries pressuring Egypt to stand up to Israel. Nasser didn't believe Israel would strike first—he thought Egypt's military buildup would deter it. Egypt hoped to assert regional dominance and avoid war at the same time.

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**Group 3: Syria** - Syria was already hostile toward Israel and had engaged in frequent border skirmishes in the months leading up to the war. It had formed a defense pact with Egypt and began massing troops along its border with Israel. Syria felt emboldened by its alliance with Egypt and Soviet backing. Syrian leaders believed that Israel was provoking war, especially after the military parade in Jerusalem. Syria didn't necessarily want war, but it was eager to show it wouldn't back down, and it didn't want to appear weak to the other Arab nations.

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**Group 4: Jordan** - Jordan was more cautious and had a history of secret communications with Israel. However, under pressure from Egypt and Syria, and given the defense treaties in place, Jordan began to mobilize its troops. It eventually joined the war once the fighting began, especially after being misinformed that Egypt had defeated Israel's air force. King Hussein believed that joining the fight was a matter of regional solidarity—even though he feared the consequences. Jordan's entry into the war led to the loss of East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

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**Group 5: The Soviet Union** - The USSR provided Egypt with inaccurate intelligence, claiming that Israeli forces were massing near the Syrian border. This intelligence triggered Egypt's mobilization and the chain reaction that followed. The Soviets likely intended to increase pressure on Israel and the West, while strengthening Arab allies, without intending to start a full-scale war. Once war broke out, the USSR supported Arab countries diplomatically and militarily but did not intervene directly.

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**Group 6: UN Peacekeeping Force** - The UN peacekeepers had been stationed in the Sinai as a buffer since 1956. When Egypt demanded their removal in May 1967, the UN complied without resistance or negotiation. They didn't consult with Israel or explore alternative deployments. Their withdrawal removed a key stabilizing force. The UN's inaction shocked Israeli leadership and was seen as a sign that Israel was now alone in facing its hostile neighbors.

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### Next Step in Activity:

3. Your group should answer:
  - What did our actor believe at the time?
  - What fears or pressures shaped their decisions?
  - What signals did we misinterpret—or send that others might have misunderstood?
  
4. Then, reconstruct the sequence of events on a shared timeline or diagram. Identify at least three key misunderstandings or miscalculations that made war more likely.

### Debrief Prompts (for the full group):

- At what point could the war have been prevented?
- How did fear, honor, or reputation drive escalation?  
What role did outside powers (like the USSR) play in fueling tensions?

## **Activity #3: Brinkmanship Role Debate**

**Goal:** Explore how different actors might have justified or opposed a preemptive strike.

### Instructions:

1. Break into 4–5 person groups. Each group represents a different position:
  - The Israeli Cabinet is debating whether to strike first.
  - Arab leaders interpreting Israel's parade in Jerusalem.
  - The UN peacekeepers being expelled.
  - European or American diplomats watching the situation unfold.
  - Arab radio broadcasters amplifying threats.
  
2. Each group prepares a brief position statement on:
  - Whether their actor viewed war as inevitable.
  - Whether they supported preemptive or reactive action.

- What alternative actions, if any, they could have taken to lower the risk of war.
3. Hold a moderated “emergency summit” where each group presents their case.

**Reflection Questions:**

- What surprised you about how each actor saw the conflict?
- What role did fear, miscommunication, or honor play in your decision-making?  
Could a shared agreement or trust have averted war?

## **Activity #4 - The Media Echo Chamber**

**Goal:** Analyze how media—especially rhetoric and images—shaped public perception and panic.

**Instructions:**

1. Groups read short excerpts of fictionalized but realistic headlines or radio transcripts - see below - (e.g., “The Sea Will Run Red with Jewish Blood”).
2. Discuss in your group:
  - How would your average citizen respond to hearing this?
  - How do fear and media amplify one another?
  - What kind of psychological environment was created in Israel and Arab countries?
3. Then, each group writes one alternate headline that might have helped de-escalate tensions.

**Debrief Prompts:**

- What power does the media (including rumors) have in conflict escalation?
- What forms of communication might have helped reduce panic or misunderstanding?

### **Fictionalized Radio Transcript: Voice of the Arabs (Cairo Radio), May 28, 1967**

Source: “*Voice of the Arabs*” — Cairo-based state-run radio

Audience: Pan-Arab regional public

Language: Translated from Arabic (fictionalized for educational purposes)

ANNOUNCER (deep, resonant voice): Citizens of the Arab world, brothers and sisters from Baghdad to Damascus, from Cairo to Amman — listen well. The time of humiliation has passed. The era of hesitation is over. The Arab nation is rising. Today, the brave forces of the Egyptian Army stand side by side with our Syrian and Jordanian brothers, prepared to strike down the

Zionist entity that has defiled our land since 1948. We bring you this message directly from the frontlines of the Sinai, where our heroic divisions stand ready to defend Arab dignity and liberate every inch of stolen land.

FIELD CORRESPONDENT (excited tone): I'm standing just kilometers from the Israeli border. Egyptian soldiers chant in unison, calling for the liberation of Palestine. Their commanders assure us: *"We will crush the enemy. This time, we will not stop at the ceasefire lines."* One commander told me, *"The sea will run red with Jewish blood if war comes. Tel Aviv will fall like a dry leaf in a storm."*

ANNOUNCER (returning to studio): Let it be known: We do not seek war — but if war is forced upon us, we shall prevail. The Zionists have hidden behind international powers for too long. Now, they are alone. The cowardly UN peacekeepers have fled. The Straits of Tiran are closed — sealed as a sovereign right of the Arab Republic. Israel has threatened preemptive action. But let them come. Let them taste the fire of Arab resistance.

To our Palestinian brothers — hold fast. Liberation is near. To our Arab soldiers — march with pride. To the Zionists — leave while you can. We are coming.

## Definitions and Key Terms:

**Six-Day War (June 5-10, 1967)** – A brief but transformative war in which Israel preemptively attacked Egypt and Syria in response to mounting threats and won a decisive victory, tripling its territory.

**Gamal Abdel Nasser** – The Egyptian president who escalated tensions by amassing troops in Sinai, expelling UN peacekeepers, and closing the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping.

**The Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip** – Territory that Israel took control of after the rapid defeat of Egyptian forces.

**West Bank and East Jerusalem** – Territory that Israel captured from Jordan, leading to the reunification of Jerusalem and control of the West Bank.

**The Golan Heights** – Territory that Israel captured from Syrian forces, securing this strategic high ground to prevent future attacks.

**UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967)** – A diplomatic resolution calling for Israel's withdrawal from occupied territories in exchange for peace, though its wording led to ongoing disputes over its interpretation.

**East Jerusalem Reunification** – Israel’s decision to unify East and West Jerusalem under Israeli control, granting Arab residents permanent residency status.

**Moshe Dayan** – Israel’s defense minister and a central figure in the Six-Day War, known for his leadership and controversial approach to handling newly occupied territories.

**“Facts on the Ground” (Ovodot B’Shetach)** – The strategy of creating realities through Jewish settlement in newly acquired territories.

**Gush Etzion Resettlement** – The rebuilding of a Jewish community south of Jerusalem that had been destroyed during the 1948 war.

**Peace vs. Retention Debate** – The Israeli internal divide over whether to trade occupied territories for peace or maintain them for security and historical claims.

## **Further Learning:**

**Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East by Michael Oren** - This book is a deeply researched and highly readable account of the events leading up to, during, and immediately after the 1967 Six-Day War.

**Accidental Empire by Gershom Gorenberg** - This book examines how, in the years following the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel began building settlements in the West Bank, Gaza, Sinai, and the Golan Heights—often without a clear plan or government policy.

**A History of Israel by Anita Shapira** - Offers a comprehensive and balanced account of Israel’s formation, tracing its Zionist roots, key political and military events, and the social and cultural evolution of the Jewish state.

**A Short History of the Jewish People by Raymond Scheindlin** - Chapters 10 and 11 offer a concise but intellectually nuanced history of Zionism and Israel.

**Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn by Daniel Gordis** - Offers insights into Israel’s formation, demographic changes, and geopolitical context.

### **Six-Day War**

- <https://unpacked.education/video/six-day-war-project/>

### **Six-Day War Mini Series**

- <https://unpacked.media/video-series/six-day-war-project/>

## Chapter 12: First Intifada

### Instructions:

This guide is designed to deepen engagement with the course materials through conversation, reflection, and learning. Consider these ways to incorporate it:

- Use the guide as a starting point for thinking about how you'd like to use this course, different ways to start discussions, and activities to help participants engage personally.
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- Distribute printed copies for participants to use as a space for notes or a dedicated spot to record their questions as they watch the course videos.
- Please use your judgment to determine which activities are most appropriate and effective for the specific group you're working with.

### Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

Below is a list of discussion and reflection questions to help engage your group. We've provided a comprehensive list so you can choose the ones that work best for your group. Feel free to use the questions that resonate with you and set aside the questions that don't.

Here's how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you're using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. What were the long-term and immediate causes of the First Intifada?
2. How do rumors and misinformation escalate conflict in a tense political context?
3. Why were both the Israeli government and the PLO caught off guard by the Intifada?
4. How did the First Intifada blend violent and nonviolent resistance?
5. What strategies did Palestinians use to gain global attention?
6. How did the media shape international perceptions of the uprising?
7. How did this uprising affect Palestinian national identity?
8. How did Israel respond to the uprising, both militarily and politically?
9. What effect did this response have on Israel internally, as well as on Israel's image

internationally?

10. How did the military's position differ from those of political leaders?
11. Why was the First Intifada such a turning point for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
12. How did other Arab states and Arab Israelis respond to the uprising?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities: (1 option)

### **Activity #1 - Crisis Simulation: Israeli Cabinet During the Uprising**

**Scenario:** It is January 1988. The Intifada is intensifying. Your group is the Israeli war cabinet.

#### **Roles:**

- Prime Minister (Likud)
- Defense Minister
- Chief of Staff for the Israeli Army (IDF)
- Labor opposition leader
- Foreign Ministry advisor

#### **Task:**

- Propose a coordinated response to the Intifada.
- Consider: military suppression, political negotiation, public messaging, international diplomacy, and long term solution to the problem.

#### **Debrief Prompts:**

- How do different government roles shape views on conflict resolution?
- What tensions arise between security and long-term political vision?

## Definitions and Key Terms:

**First Intifada (1987-1993)** – A Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule in the West Bank and Gaza, characterized by protests, civil disobedience, and violent clashes.

**Six-Day War (1967)** – A war in which Israel defeated Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, leading to its occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights.

**West Bank and Gaza Strip** – Territories Israel captured from Jordan and Egypt, often referred to as the Palestinian Territories.

**Settlements** – Israeli civilian communities established in the West Bank and Gaza

**Intifada (Arabic: “shaking off”)** – A term used to describe Palestinian uprisings against Israeli control.

**PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization)** – A political and military organization representing Palestinians, led by Yasser Arafat at the time of the First Intifada.

**Hamas** – A Palestinian Islamist terrorist organization founded in 1987 as a spin-off of the Muslim Brotherhood. It governs the Gaza Strip and is designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S., EU, and other nations.

**Ze’ev Jabotinsky** – A revisionist Zionist leader whose ideology influenced Likud Party leaders, including Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

**Yitzhak Shamir** – Israeli Prime Minister during the First Intifada, a member of the right leaning Likud Party.

**Likud Party** – A right-leaning political party in Israel that supported a strong military response to the Intifada.

**Labor Party** – A center-left political party in Israel that became more open to negotiations and land concessions for peace.

**IDF (Israel Defense Forces)** – The Israeli military, which was unprepared for managing a prolonged civilian uprising.

## **Further Learning:**

**“A History of Israel” by Anita Shapira** - Offers a comprehensive and balanced account of Israel’s formation, tracing its Zionist roots, key political and military events, and the social and cultural evolution of the Jewish state.

**“A Short History of the Jewish People” by Raymond Scheindlin** - Chapters 10 and 11 offer a concise but intellectually nuanced history of Zionism and Israel.

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### **What Was the First Intifada?**

- <https://unpacked.education/video/what-was-the-first-intifada/>

### **The First Intifada**

- <https://unpacked.media/the-first-intifada-a-grassroots-movement/>

### **The First Intifada - When Non-Violent Protests Turned Violent**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6zftP9yJy8>

### **What Does “Globalize the Intifada” Mean?**

- <https://www.ajc.org/news/what-does-globalize-the-intifada-mean-and-how-can-it-lead-to-targeting-jews-with-violence>

## **Chapter 13: Birth of Hamas**

### **Instructions:**

This guide is designed to deepen engagement with the course materials through conversation, reflection, and learning. Consider these ways to incorporate it:

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- Distribute printed copies for participants to use as a space for notes or a dedicated spot to record their questions as they watch the course videos.
- Please use your judgment to determine which activities are most appropriate and effective for the specific group you’re working with.

### **Questions for Discussion/Reflection:**

Below is a list of discussion and reflection questions to help engage your group. We’ve provided a comprehensive list so you can choose the ones that work best for your group. Feel free to use the questions that resonate with you and set aside the questions that don’t.

Here’s how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you’re using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. What historical and political factors contributed to the founding of Hamas in 1987?
2. How does Hamas’s original 1988 charter reflect its core ideology and goals?
3. How should we interpret the 2017 charter revision? Is it a true shift or strategic rebranding?

4. What was the significance of Hamas introducing suicide bombings into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
5. How did Hamas gain control of the Gaza Strip? How does this split affect Palestinian unity and peace negotiations?
6. What does Hamas's governance of Gaza look like in practice?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

### **Activity # 1 - Charter Analysis: Then and Now**

**Instructions:** Break people into small groups and ask them to compare the PLO charter from 1964 with the Hamas Charters from 1988 and 2017. Ask each group to spend some time going through the guiding questions below. Ask the groups to be prepared to share with the larger group what came up in their small group discussions.

#### **Compare Three Charters**

- **1964 PLO Charter:** Focus on anti-Zionist and antisemitic language
- **Hamas 1988 Charter:** Focus on anti-Israel and antisemitic language
- **Hamas 2017 Charter:** Focus on softened rhetoric and conditional acceptance of a Palestinian state

**For access to the full texts of these charters, you can follow this link:**

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OxhH4\\_PmEy2ebQ4QoLpe6KpUr7J596Y1bkA4QXOXM8/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OxhH4_PmEy2ebQ4QoLpe6KpUr7J596Y1bkA4QXOXM8/edit?usp=sharing)

**For access to a digest of the texts of these charters, you can follow this link:**

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qbKQRVvayjsvd\\_UzQSZwTS7fjYjGJ4kzXOYFW3dHlh4/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qbKQRVvayjsvd_UzQSZwTS7fjYjGJ4kzXOYFW3dHlh4/edit?usp=sharing)

#### **Guiding Questions for Charter Analysis**

1. What language and terminology stands out to you in the 1988 Charter?
2. How is the Hamas Charter in 1988 similar or different from the tone and language found in the charter of the Palestinian Liberation Organization from 1964?
3. When you read the 1988 Hamas Charter side by side with the revision in 2017, what changed about the tone and content and what didn't?
4. Is the 2017 revision a shift in ideology or just a tactical move?

## **Activity #2 - Media Literacy Exercise: Labeling Hamas**

### **Instructions:**

- Review sample headlines from different outlets (real or fabricated for this exercise) that label Hamas in various ways: “militant group,” “Islamist movement,” “terrorists,” and “freedom fighters.”

### **Task:**

- Identify: What message does each label send?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What values are being reinforced?

### **Discussion:**

- How does language shape public opinion and policy?

## **Activity #3 - Mapping Exercise: Understanding the Division of Palestinian Territories**

### **Instructions:**

- Color in:
  - Gaza Strip = Hamas control
  - West Bank = PA control
- Mark:
  - Key cities: Gaza City, Ramallah, Hebron
  - Security barriers
  - Israeli-controlled zones

### **Reflection Questions:**

- What are the geographic and political consequences of a divided Palestine?
- How does the split affect daily life and diplomacy?

## **Definitions and Key Terms:**

**Hamas** – A Palestinian Islamist terrorist organization founded in 1987 as a spin-off of the Muslim Brotherhood. It governs the Gaza Strip and is designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S., EU, and other nations.

**Muslim Brotherhood** – A Sunni Islamist organization founded in Egypt that aims to establish an Islamic state governed by Sharia law (Muslim Law).

**Sheikh Ahmed Yassin** – A Muslim cleric and founder of Hamas. He was a key leader in the Palestinian territories and helped establish Hamas’s ideological foundation.

**Intifada** – Arabic for “uprising.” The First Intifada (1987-1993) was a Palestinian rebellion against Israeli rule, during which Hamas was founded.

**1988 Hamas Charter** – The founding document of Hamas, calling for the destruction of Israel and the establishment of an Islamic state in its place. It contains strong antisemitic rhetoric.

**2017 Hamas Charter Revision** – A modified version of Hamas’s charter that softened some of its rhetoric but did not recognize Israel’s right to exist.

**Suicide Bombing** – A tactic introduced by Hamas in 1993 where attackers detonate explosives on their bodies to maximize casualties.

**Oslo Accords** – A set of peace agreements between Israel and the PLO (1993), opposed by Hamas, which responded with violent attacks to undermine the peace process.

**Palestinian Authority (PA)** – The governing body of the West Bank, controlled by Fatah. It is Hamas’s rival and was violently expelled from Gaza in 2006-07.

**Gaza Strip** – A small, densely populated coastal territory bordered by Israel and Egypt. It has been controlled by Hamas since 2007.

**West Bank** – A territory Israel captured from Jordan in 1967 that is now home to approximately 2.8 million Palestinians and about 480,000 Jewish settlers; under partial Palestinian Authority and Israeli military control.

**Sharia Law** – Islamic legal framework that Hamas enforces in Gaza, restricting alcohol consumption and requiring halal food.

**Fatah** – A major Palestinian political party and Hamas’s main rival, controlling the PA in the West Bank.

## **Further Learning:**

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**“A Short History of the Jewish People” by Raymond Scheindlin** - Chapters 10 and 11 offer a concise but intellectually nuanced history of Zionism and Israel.

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## Chapter 14: Second Intifada

### Instructions:

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### Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

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Here’s how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you’re using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. What were the key moments that eroded trust on both sides?
2. What was Arafat offered at the 2000 Camp David Accords, and why was Arafat’s rejection of the offer so significant?
3. How did the Second Intifada differ from the First Intifada in terms of tactics and symbolism?
4. What security measures did Israel implement in response to the Second Intifada?

5. Why is the terminology (“wall,” “fence,” “barrier”) used to describe Israel’s West Bank security structure so politically charged? Given the data, what term do you think is most accurate to describe it?
6. How did the Second Intifada reshape Israeli attitudes toward the peace process and Palestinians?
7. How did the Second Intifada contribute to the broader sense of cynicism about a two-state solution on both sides?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

### **Activity #1 - Negotiation Simulation: After Camp David 2000**

#### **Scenario:**

It’s July 2000, shortly after the Camp David summit failed.

#### **Break into three smaller groups:**

- Israeli government negotiators
- Palestinian Authority representatives
- U.S. mediators

#### **Task:**

Ask each group to prepare a short brief for the larger group that addresses the following questions

1. What aspects of the offer worked for this group and which aspects did not meet your needs for peace?
2. What kinds of counter proposals might have helped lead to a workable agreement?
3. What are the red lines and the compromises that your group’s view on what could make a workable peace agreement?

#### **Debrief Prompt:**

- How hard is it to overcome deep mistrust after years of conflict?

### **Activity # 2 - Crisis Mapping: Flashpoints of the Second Intifada**

**Instructions:** Using the handout map:

- Mark:
  - Sites of major suicide bombings (buses, cafes, hotels)

- Key military responses (e.g., siege of Arafat’s compound, barrier construction)

**Discussion:**

- What geographic patterns do you notice?
- How do these flashpoints reflect the broader strategic aims of each side?

### **Activity # 3 - Wall vs. Fence vs. Barrier**

**Instructions:** Review a set of mock headlines:

- Some refer to a “separation wall.”
- Some to a “security fence.”
- Some to a “defensive barrier.”

**Task:**

- Identify the emotional and political tone of each headline.
- How does word choice subtly shape public opinion?

**Debrief Prompts:**

- How can we discuss contested infrastructure more neutrally and factually?

### **Activity # 4 - Reflection Debate: Did the Second Intifada Kill the Israeli Peace Camp?**

**Prompt:**

- “The Second Intifada permanently weakened the Israeli Peace Movement.”

**Instructions:**

- Split into two sides:
  - **Agree:** The violence destroyed faith in negotiation.
  - **Disagree:** The Peace Camp was weakened but not destroyed; hope can return.

**Discussion:**

- What conditions might help rebuild trust in the future?

### **Definitions and Key Terms:**

**Second Intifada (2000-2005)** - A violent Palestinian uprising against Israeli control, characterized by widespread suicide bombings and Israeli military responses.

**Oslo Accords (1993)** - A series of agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) aimed at achieving peace, which ultimately failed to prevent further conflict.

**Yitzhak Rabin (1922-1995)** - Israeli Prime Minister and key leader of the Oslo peace process, assassinated in 1995 by an extremist opposed to territorial concessions.

**Camp David Summit (2000)** - A peace negotiation, hosted by U.S. president Bill Clinton, between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority (PA) leader Yasser Arafat, in which Israel offered the Palestinians a significant peace proposal, which was rejected by Arafat.

**Ehud Barak** - Israeli Prime Minister (1999-2001) who offered the Palestinians a significant peace proposal at the Camp David Summit, which was rejected by Arafat.

**Yasser Arafat** - Leader of the PLO and Palestinian Authority dating back to the 1960s. During the Second Intifada, he was criticized for not stopping violence and rejecting peace offers.

**Ariel Sharon** - Israeli military leader and politician who became Prime Minister in 2001 and led a strong military response to Palestinian attacks.

**Palestinian Authority (PA)** - The governing body of Palestinian territories, led by Arafat during the Second Intifada, accused of encouraging violence.

**Suicide Bombings** - A major tactic used by Palestinian militants during the Second Intifada, targeting Israeli civilians in malls, buses, hotels, and cafés.

**Security Checkpoints** - Israeli military outposts set up across the West Bank to monitor and restrict movement, intended to prevent attacks but criticized for impacting Palestinian daily life.

**Security Barrier/ Wall/Fence** - A barrier built by Israel around the West Bank to prevent suicide attacks.

**Ramallah Siege (2002-2004)** - Israeli military operation that confined Arafat to his compound in Ramallah, effectively making him a prisoner.

**Green Line (1949 Armistice Line)** - The internationally recognized border of Israel that marks the armistice line when a ceasefire was reached during the 1948 war. The Green Line served as a reference for the placement of the security barrier.

**Israeli Left / Peace Movement** - A political group advocating for peace with Palestinians, significantly weakened after the Second Intifada.

## Further Learning:

**“A History of Israel” by Anita Shapira** - Offers a comprehensive and balanced account of Israel’s formation, tracing its Zionist roots, key political and military events, and the social and cultural evolution of the Jewish state.

**“A Short History of the Jewish People” by Raymond Scheindlin** - Chapters 10 and 11 offer a concise but intellectually nuanced history of Zionism and Israel.

**“Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn” by Daniel Gordis** - Offers insights into Israel’s formation, demographic changes, and geopolitical context.

### **Covering the Intifada: How the Media Reported the Palestinian Uprising**

- <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pdf/view/8915/en>

### **Article Showcasing the Impact of Terrorism**

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/11/world/a-healer-of-terror-victims-becomes-one.html>

### **Story of Hebrew University Bombing during second Intifada**

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/08/01/world/at-least-7-killed-as-militants-bomb-jerusalem-campus.html?searchResultPosition=3>

### **Article about Female Suicide Bombers**

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wafa\\_Idris#:~:text=Wafa%20Idris%20\(Arabic%3A%20%D9%88%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%A1%20%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B3,bombing%20during%20the%20Second%20Intifada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wafa_Idris#:~:text=Wafa%20Idris%20(Arabic%3A%20%D9%88%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%A1%20%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B3,bombing%20during%20the%20Second%20Intifada).

### **Map of Suicide Attacks in ISrael during Second Intifada**

- [https://www.reddit.com/r/MapPorn/comments/128rib0/suicide\\_attacks\\_in\\_israel\\_2002005/#lightbox](https://www.reddit.com/r/MapPorn/comments/128rib0/suicide_attacks_in_israel_2002005/#lightbox)

## **Chapter 15: Origins of the Oslo Peace Process**

### Instructions:

This guide is designed to deepen engagement with the course materials through conversation, reflection, and learning. Consider these ways to incorporate it:

- Use the guide as a starting point for thinking about how you'd like to use this course, different ways to start discussions, and activities to help participants engage personally.
- Equip others in your community or on your team with the skills and confidence to facilitate Israel and Zionism learning for others.
- Distribute printed copies for participants to use as a space for notes or a dedicated spot to record their questions as they watch the course videos.
- Please use your judgment to determine which activities are most appropriate and effective for the specific group you're working with.

### Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

Below is a list of discussion and reflection questions to help engage your group. We've provided a comprehensive list so you can choose the ones that work best for your group. Feel free to use the questions that resonate with you and set aside the questions that don't.

Here's how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you're using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. How did the collapse of the Soviet Union and the outcome of the Gulf War change regional politics in the Middle East to allow for the Oslo Peace Process?
2. Why do you think the secret talks in Oslo were more successful than the official Madrid Conference negotiations?
3. What does the handshake between Rabin and Arafat symbolize, and why was it so significant at the time?
4. How does Rabin's comment — "Peace you do with enemies... sometimes bitter enemies" — reflect the emotional and political complexity of the moment?
5. What are the "final status issues," and why were they left for later negotiations? Was that a wise strategy?
6. What emotions does this chapter evoke for you—hope, frustration, cynicism, inspiration? Why?
7. How might your perspective on Oslo change depending on whether you lived through that era or learned about it later?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

### **Activity # 1 - Timeline Reconstruction**

**Objective:** Deepen understanding of the historical sequence that led to the Oslo Accords.

- Each group receives mixed event cards (collapse of USSR, Madrid Conference, Oslo Accords, Rabin elected, etc.).
- Groups reconstruct the timeline and explain how each step created momentum for the next.

**Debrief Prompt:**

Which events were most pivotal in creating space for diplomacy?

## **Activity #2 - “Final Status Issues” Brainstorm**

**Objective:** Grapple with the unfinished business of the Oslo Accords.

- Groups are assigned one of the five final status issues (Jerusalem, refugees, borders, security, settlements).
- Each group researches and prepares a five minute summary of why the issue remains unresolved.
- Optional: groups propose a potential compromise, then reflect on its feasibility.

### **Definitions and Key Terms:**

**Oslo Peace Process** – A series of secret negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1992-1993 that led to the Oslo Accords, aiming to establish a framework for peace.

**Soviet Union Collapse** – The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, which led to the PLO losing its strongest international backer and shifting the balance of power in the Middle East.

**First Gulf War (1991)** – A conflict in which the U.S.-led coalition defeated Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait. The PLO’s support for Saddam Hussein led to its global isolation, pushing it toward negotiations.

**Madrid Conference (1991)** – A U.S.-led peace initiative hosted by President George H.W. Bush, aimed at fostering multilateral negotiations between Israel and Arab nations, though it failed to produce a breakthrough.

**Yitzhak Rabin** – Israeli Prime Minister (1974-1977 and 1992-1995) from the Labor Party who supported peace efforts and played a key role in negotiating the Oslo Accords.

**Yitzhak Shamir** – Former Israeli Prime Minister (1986-1992) from the Likud Party, known for his more hardline stance against negotiations with the PLO.

**Oslo I Accords (1993)** – The first agreement between Israel and the PLO, establishing mutual recognition and the framework for Palestinian self-governance under the Palestinian Authority.

**Mutual Recognition Letters (1993)** – Formal acknowledgments in which Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, and the PLO recognized Israel’s right to exist while renouncing terrorism.

**Palestinian Authority (PA)** – A governing body established under the Oslo Accords to administer Palestinian areas in the West Bank and Gaza as an interim step toward self-rule.

**Final Status Issues** – Core unresolved matters deferred for later negotiations, including the status of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Israeli settlements, security arrangements, and borders.

**White House Handshake (1993)** – A historic moment when Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat shook hands in front of U.S. President Bill Clinton, symbolizing a new era of negotiations.

**Bill Clinton** – U.S. President (1993–2001) who played a crucial mediating role in the Oslo Peace Process and subsequent Middle East peace efforts.

**Yasser Arafat** – Leader of the PLO and a central figure in Palestinian politics, who negotiated with Israel during the Oslo process.

**Oslo II Accords (1995)** – A follow-up agreement outlining Israel’s phased withdrawal from certain Palestinian territories and security arrangements.

**West Bank Division (Oslo II)** – A classification system for governance and security in the West Bank:

**Area A** – Full Palestinian Authority control

**Area B** – PA civil control, Israeli security control

**Area C** – Full Israeli control

**Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty (1994)** – A treaty signed shortly after the Oslo I Accords, establishing diplomatic relations and resolving border issues between Israel and Jordan.

**Interim Agreements** – The Oslo Accords were meant as temporary steps toward a final peace settlement, though many provisions remain unresolved to this day.

## **Further Learning:**

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**“A Short History of the Jewish People” by Raymond Scheindlin** – Chapters 10 and 11 offer a concise but intellectually nuanced history of Zionism and Israel.

**“Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn” by Daniel Gordis** – Offers insights into Israel’s formation, demographic changes, and geopolitical context.

**“From Beirut to Jerusalem” by Thomas L. Friedman** – . Friedman drew upon his ten years of experience reporting from Lebanon and Israel to write this now-classic work of journalism. This book is a great help in understanding the politics and struggles for peace in the modern middle east.

#### **Shattered Dreams Documentary**

- <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/shattered-dreams-of-peace/>

#### **Understanding the Middle East Conflicts from a Diplomat's View: Ambassador Dennis Ross**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWVcMXyTOyM>

#### **Myths, Illusions, and Peace: Finding a New Direction for America in the Middle East by Dennis Ross (Author), David Makovsky (Author)**

- <https://www.amazon.com/Myths-Illusions-Peace-Finding-Direction/dp/0670020893>

#### **Israel-Palestine Liberation Organization Agreement (1993)**

- [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/21st\\_century/isrplo.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/21st_century/isrplo.asp)

#### **Listen to Arafat in Arabic, Not in English**

- <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1996-02-27-me-40531-story.html>

#### **Rabin-Arafat Handshake on White House Lawn Video**

- <https://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/1993-rabin-and-arafat-shake-hands-at-white-house-with-president-clinton-194738757513>

#### **Assassination of Rabin**

- <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/11/05/world/assassination-israel-overview-rabin-slain-after-peace-rally-tel-aviv-israeli.html>

# Chapter 16: How the Oslo Process Failed

## Instructions:

This guide is designed to deepen engagement with the course materials through conversation, reflection, and learning. Consider these ways to incorporate it:

- Use the guide as a starting point for thinking about how you'd like to use this course, different ways to start discussions, and activities to help participants engage personally.
- Equip others in your community or on your team with the skills and confidence to facilitate Israel and Zionism learning for others.
- Distribute printed copies for participants to use as a space for notes or a dedicated spot to record their questions as they watch the course videos.
- Please use your judgment to determine which activities are most appropriate and effective for the specific group you're working with.

## Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

Below is a list of discussion and reflection questions to help engage your group. We've provided a comprehensive list so you can choose the ones that work best for your group. Feel free to use the questions that resonate with you and set aside the questions that don't.

Here's how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you're using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. What underlying problems weakened optimism during the early years of the Oslo Peace Process?
2. Why did extremist elements on both sides (e.g., Jewish religious radicals, Hamas, Islamic Jihad) work to sabotage Oslo?
3. Why was Rabin's assassination such a critical blow to the peace process? What broader societal tensions did it expose in Israeli society?
4. How did the leadership changes in Israel—from Rabin to Peres to Netanyahu to Barak—affect the direction of the peace process?
5. Why did Ehud Barak's ambitious peace offer at Camp David fail to achieve agreement? How much responsibility should be assigned to Arafat for the failure?

6. What lessons can be drawn from Oslo about how to build—or lose—momentum in peace efforts?
7. Do you think Oslo was doomed from the start, or could it have succeeded under different conditions?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

### **Activity #1 - Root Cause Analysis: Why Oslo Collapsed**

#### **Instructions:**

- Groups brainstorm and diagram the different causes of Oslo’s failure: political, societal, economic, leadership, extremists.
- Identify: Which cause was most fatal?

#### **Debrief Prompt:**

- Could stronger leadership or better security arrangements have saved Oslo?

### **Activity #2 - Rabin’s Legacy Reflection**

#### **Prompt:**

- Imagine writing a letter to future peacemakers based on Rabin’s final years.

#### **Task:**

- In pairs, draft a paragraph reflecting on:
  - What Rabin’s legacy teaches about courage and risk in peace efforts.

### **Activity #3 - Camp David Negotiation Simulation**

#### **Scenario:**

- One side plays Ehud Barak’s team; the other plays Arafat’s advisors.

#### **Task:**

- Try to create a mutually acceptable agreement based on Barak’s offer.

#### **Debrief Prompt:**

- How easy or difficult was the compromise?
- What emotional, historical, and political barriers got in the way?

## **Further Learning:**

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### **Shattered Dreams Documentary**

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### **Understanding the Middle East Conflicts from a Diplomat's View: Ambassador Dennis Ross**

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### **Assassination of Rabin**

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## Chapter 17: 10/7 to Today

### Instructions:

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### Questions for Discussion/Reflection:

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Here's how to apply these questions: a) pose them to the group to facilitate discussion, b) use them as part of a four corners activity, a group debate, or any other engagement tool you're using, or c) use them to help participants process and absorb the content of the course.

1. What factors led to Hamas taking control of Gaza after Israel's 2005 withdrawal?
2. What broader geopolitical forces—such as Iran, Russia, and China—played a role in Hamas's decision to attack?
3. Why did Gaza become a base for continued attacks rather than stability?
4. Why were the October 7, 2023, attacks so historically shocking?
5. What tactics did Hamas use on 10/7 that indicate premeditation and intentional cruelty?
6. How does the evidence of sexual violence reshape our understanding of the attacks?
7. Why is it problematic to rely solely on Hamas-affiliated sources for casualty counts in Gaza?
8. How does Israel's combatant-to-civilian casualty ratio compare to other wars (e.g., the

Gulf War)?

## Options for Facilitations/Activities:

## **Activity #1 - Media Literacy Workshop: Analyzing War Reporting**

### **Task:**

- Compare two headlines or news clips—one sympathetic to Gaza, one sympathetic to Israel.

### **Fictitious Sample #1 - “Israel’s Genocidal Assault on Gaza Continues as Global Outrage Mounts”**

In what human rights advocates are calling a campaign of ethnic cleansing, Israel has continued its relentless bombing of Gaza, killing scores of civilians and flattening entire neighborhoods. While Israeli officials claim they are targeting Hamas militants, the overwhelming majority of casualties have been women and children, according to Gaza’s Ministry of Health. Critics argue that the indiscriminate use of force amounts to genocide, with international legal experts calling for immediate action to stop what they describe as a systematic effort to erase Palestinian life from Gaza. Despite mounting evidence and global protests, Western powers continue to offer political cover to Israel’s war machine.

### **Fictitious Sample #2 - “Israel Targets Hamas with Precision; Gaza’s Complicity Undermines Claims of Civilian Innocence”**

Following the barbaric October 7 attacks, Israel has responded with justified and measured force to eliminate the Hamas threat. While international critics cry foul over civilian casualties, Israeli officials point out that Hamas was democratically elected and continues to enjoy significant support among Gazans. “There are no truly innocent civilians in Gaza,” one government spokesperson stated, “when the population votes for and shelters terrorists who seek our destruction.” The IDF continues to carry out surgical strikes, using intelligence to target militants and avoid unnecessary harm, but as long as Hamas remains embedded in civilian areas, responsibility lies with those who enable terror from within.

### **Questions:**

- What biases are visible in each sample?
- What words do you see that are well situated to provoke strong moral reactions from the reader?
- How would you rewrite this article to be more fact based and less biased?

### **Debrief Prompt:**

- How can readers critically evaluate war reporting?

## **Activity #2 - Reflecting on that Day**

Turn to a person next to you or discuss as a group and reflect on the following questions

1. Think back to your own memory of October 7th - what images, feelings and reactions stand out to you?
2. Why do you think that October 7th has led to a “surge” in Jews in North America seeking out ways to reconnect with their Jewish identity and community?
3. Did October 7th affect you personally? If so, what changed for you on that day?

## **Activity #3 - Trading Prisoners for Hostages**

Below is some background information to set the stage for this activity

### **Timeline: Israel’s History of Prisoner Swaps**

#### **1956 – First Known Prisoner Exchange**

- During the Sinai Campaign, Israel and Egypt exchanged a small number of POWs.

#### **1968 – Exchange with Syria**

- Israel released hundreds of Syrian prisoners captured during the Six-Day War in exchange for three Israeli pilots.

#### **1979 – First Large Swap with PLO**

- Israel released 76 Fatah militants in exchange for one Israeli soldier captured in Lebanon.

#### **1983 – Jibril Agreement**

- One of the most controversial swaps: Israel released 1,150 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners, including convicted terrorists, in exchange for three Israeli soldiers captured during the Lebanon War.
- Critics said many released prisoners returned to militant activity.

#### **2004 – Swap with Hezbollah**

- Israel released 435 prisoners, including Palestinians and Lebanese, in exchange for an Israeli businessman and the bodies of three IDF soldiers.

#### **2008 – Regev and Goldwasser Exchange**

- Israel released five Hezbollah militants and the remains of 199 Lebanese and Palestinian fighters in exchange for the bodies of IDF reservists Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, kidnapped in 2006.

- One of those released, Samir Kuntar, was convicted of a brutal attack in 1979.

### **2011 – Gilad Shalit Deal**

- After five years in Hamas captivity, Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was released in exchange for 1,027 Palestinian prisoners.
- Many of those released were convicted of violent acts, and some later resumed militant activity.
- The deal was extremely popular in Israel but also deeply controversial.

### **Redeeming the Captive is a Deeply Held Jewish Value**

The Talmud (Bava Batra 8b) calls redeeming the captive a "*mitzvah rabbah*" (great mitzvah) and says that captivity is worse than starvation and death. Maimonides rules that he who ignores ransoming a captive is guilty of transgressing commandments such as "you shall not harden your heart" (Deuteronomy 15:7); "you shall not stand idly by the blood of your brother" (Leviticus 19:16); and "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18).

**Objective:** Explore the moral, strategic, and emotional dilemmas involved in hostage-prisoner exchanges between Israel and Hamas, using real-world complexities to encourage nuanced discussion.

**Group Size:** 3–5 participants per group

#### **Step 1: Scenario Setup (5 minutes):**

Facilitator reads or distributes the following summary:

In response to the October 7th massacre, over 240 Israeli and foreign hostages were taken into Gaza by Hamas. In a series of negotiated exchanges, Israel agreed to release hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, many of whom were convicted of violence against Israelis. Some were minors; others had blood on their hands. The exchange sparked intense debate in Israeli society and among Jews and supporters worldwide: Was this the right choice?

#### **Step 2: Guided Small Group Discussion (25–30 minutes):**

Groups are given the following four framing questions, designed to bring out nuance, encourage multiple viewpoints, and prompt fact-based discussion.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What are the strongest arguments for Israel agreeing to such a prisoner exchange? (Consider humanitarian values, public pressure, Jewish ethical traditions, etc.)

2. What are the strongest arguments against such an exchange?  
(Consider national security, deterrence, the risk of recidivism, and long-term strategy.)
3. How might different communities—inside and outside Israel—view this trade?  
(For example: Israeli families of hostages, Palestinians in Gaza, diaspora Jews, critics of Israeli policy.)
4. Are there alternative approaches Israel could have taken? What would the trade-offs have been?

Encourage participants to use examples from past events (e.g., Gilad Shalit’s release in exchange for over 1,000 prisoners) and reflect on the moral tension between individual life and collective risk.

### **Step 3: Group Debrief and Synthesis (10–15 minutes):**

Bring all groups together. Ask each group to briefly summarize:

- What did they agree on easily?
- What was most difficult to resolve?
- What questions or tensions remain unresolved?

## **Definitions and Key Terms:**

**Gaza Strip** - A small, densely populated coastal territory bordered by Israel and Egypt. It has been controlled by Hamas since 2007.

**Hamas** - A Palestinian militant organization and governing authority in Gaza, designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S., EU, and other countries.

**Israel-Gaza Blockade** - A security measure imposed by Israel and Egypt to restrict the flow of goods and people into Gaza in order to prevent Hamas from importing weapons.

**Ariel Sharon** - Former Israeli Prime Minister who initiated Israel’s unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005 as an experiment in disengagement.

**Gilad Shalit** - An Israeli soldier kidnapped by Hamas in 2006 and held captive for over five years before being released in a prisoner exchange.

**Operation Cast Lead (2008-09)** - An Israeli military operation aimed at stopping rocket attacks from Gaza and weakening Hamas’s military infrastructure.

**Operation Protective Edge (2014)** - A major Israeli military operation launched in response to Hamas rocket attacks and cross-border tunnel threats.

**Hezbollah** - A Lebanese militant group backed by Iran that launched attacks on Israel following Hamas's October 7 assault.

**Saudi-Israel Normalization Talks** - Diplomatic efforts to establish formal ties between Saudi Arabia and Israel, which were disrupted by Hamas's attack on 10/7.

**Proxy War** - A conflict where larger powers (e.g., Iran, Russia, China, U.S.) support different sides indirectly, such as through Hamas and Hezbollah.

**Gaza Ministry of Health** - The health authority in Gaza, controlled by Hamas, which reports casualty numbers but has been criticized for inflating statistics.

**Human Shields** - The use of civilians as cover by militant groups like Hamas to deter attacks, a violation of international law.

**Nova Music Festival Massacre** - A mass shooting and hostage-taking by Hamas terrorists at an Israeli music festival on October 7, 2023.

## Further Learning:

**"A History of Israel" by Anita Shapira** - Offers a comprehensive and balanced account of Israel's formation, tracing its Zionist roots, key political and military events, and the social and cultural evolution of the Jewish state.

**"A Short History of the Jewish People" by Raymond Scheindlin** - Chapters 10 and 11 offer a concise but intellectually nuanced history of Zionism and Israel.

**"Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn" by Daniel Gordis** - Offers insights into Israel's formation, demographic changes, and geopolitical context.

**"10/7: 100 Human Stories" by Lee Yaron** (St. Martin's Press) - Draws most directly from the bottom-up reporting techniques employed by Hersey that tries to capture individual stories from 10/7.

**"October 7: Voices of Survivors and Witnesses" by Tal Chaika** (Prospecta Press) - The book is an attempt to capture the feelings and emotions of traumatized people in the days, weeks, and months after October 7.

### **Israel Post 10/7 from AIPAC**

- <https://www.aipac.org/resources?category=Israel%20At%20War>

### **The Surge - Jewish Life in North America Post 10/7**

- <https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-surge-of-interest-in-jewish-life/>

### **Rise in Antisemitism Post 10/7**

- <https://www.usnews.com/news/world-report/articles/2024-10-07/report-antisemitic-incidents-reach-record-high-in-year-since-oct-7-attack>
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/10/07/american-jews-antisemitism-israel-gaza-attacks-anniversary/>
- <https://isca.indiana.edu/documents/ISCA%20research%20papers/isca-paper-2024-2-g-rayson.pdf>